A Thousand Teachings

ŚAṄKARA

A Thousand Teachings

उपदेशसाहस्री

Translated from the Sanskrit with AI (Claude) and edited



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CONTENTS

Introduction vii

Prose Part 1

Chapter 1: Instructing the Pupil 1

Who are you? 3

Pain, ritual and the one self 10

Chapter 2: Awareness of the Changeless, Nondual Self 14

Superimposition 15

The changeless perceiver 20

Knowing that needs no proof 23

Chapter 3: Meditation by Enumeration 28

Verse Part 33

Chapter 1: Introduction 33

Chapter 2: How Knowledge of the Self Arises 36

Chapter 3: The Lord Is the Self 37

Chapter 4: The Nature of Knowing the Truth 38

Chapter 5: The Fault Lies in the Intellect 38

Chapter 6: Setting Aside the Qualifications 39

Chapter 7: What Is Mounted on the Intellect 40

Chapter 8: Dissolving the Mind 40

Chapter 9: Subtlety and Pervasiveness 41

Chapter 10: Seeing the True Nature of Awareness 42

Chapter 11: The Seer 44

Chapter 12: Light 46

Chapter 13: Without Eyes 48

Chapter 14: Dream and Memory 51

Chapter 15: One Thing Does Not Become Another 56

Chapter 16: Made of Earth 62

Chapter 17: Right Understanding 70

Chapter 18: “You Are That” 80

Chapter 19: Applying the Remedy 103

INTRODUCTION

Śaṅkara, who probably lived in the early eighth century AD, is the most celebrated teacher of Advaita ("nondual") Vedanta, the school that reads the Upanishads as teaching one thing only: that the self within each person is *brahman*, the single reality behind the world. Most of his surviving work is commentary on scripture, and only a handful of independent writings are accepted by scholars as his own. *A Thousand Teachings* is the most important of these: a manual for teachers on how to lead a pupil to liberation.

It has two parts. The Prose Part shows the method in action: how a teacher should test and instruct a pupil, then two dialogues in which a pupil who asks how to escape birth and death is led to see that his suffering rests on ignorance, on taking body and mind for the self—a "superimposition," like mistaking mother-of-pearl for silver—and a closing meditation for those seeking release. The Verse Part gathers nineteen chapters of compact arguments and meditations: on the self as pure seeing, changeless like the sky; on the error of thinking "I am the doer"; on the Upanishad's sentence "you are that," analyzed word by word in a long eighteenth chapter; and on the teacher's "remedy" for the illness of ignorance.

The work is direct and unadorned, and its arguments engage the rival schools of the day—Buddhist, Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsā. It is quoted by later Advaita authors more than any other independent work of Śaṅkara's and remains a standard introduction to his thought.

Prose Part

गद्यप्रबन्धः *(Gadyaprabandha)*

How a teacher should instruct a pupil; two dialogues on ignorance, superimposition and the changeless self; a meditation for seekers of liberation.

CHAPTER 1: INSTRUCTING THE PUPIL

How liberating knowledge should be taught, to which pupils, and by what kind of teacher.

P 1.1 Now we shall explain the method of teaching the means to liberation, for the benefit of those who seek liberation, who have faith and who are eager for it.

P 1.2 This knowledge, the means to liberation, should be taught again and again, until it is firmly grasped, to a pupil who has become indifferent to everything impermanent that is achieved through means; who has given up the desire for sons, for wealth and for worlds; who has taken up the life of a renunciant of the highest order; who is endowed with calm, self-restraint, compassion and the like; who has the qualities of a pupil well known from the scriptures; who is pure; who is a Brahmin; who has approached the teacher in the proper manner; and whose caste, occupation, conduct, learning and family have been examined.[1]

P 1.3 And scripture says: "Having examined … the knowledge of *brahman*, as it truly is." For knowledge firmly grasped serves one's own good and is passed on without a break. And the unbroken passing on of knowledge benefits living beings, as a

1 A renunciant of the highest order (*paramahaṃsa*) is an ascetic of the highest grade, who has given up home, possessions and ritual.

boat helps one who wants to cross a river. And scripture says: "Even if one were to give him this earth, girdled by water and full of wealth, this is greater than that." It must be taught, because otherwise knowledge is not attained, as scriptural texts say: "A person who has a teacher knows," "Only knowledge learned from a teacher ...," "The teacher is the one who ferries across; right knowledge is called the boat here," and as traditional texts say: "They will teach you knowledge."[2]

P 1.4 When he recognizes from signs that the pupil has not grasped the knowledge, he should remove the causes of his not grasping it—demerit, worldly negligence, the lack of earlier, firmly grasped instruction on discriminating between eternal and non-eternal things, concern for what people think, pride in caste and the like—by their opposites as enjoined in scripture and tradition: by freedom from anger and the like, by the restraints such as nonviolence, and by the observances that do not conflict with knowledge.[3]

P 1.5 He should also make him properly grasp the qualities, beginning with humility, that are the means to knowledge.[4]

P 1.6 The teacher, for his part, is skilled in reasoning for and against, in grasping and in retaining; endowed with calm, self-restraint, compassion, kindness and the like; versed in the traditional teaching; unattached to pleasures seen and unseen; one who has given up all actions and their means; a knower of *brahman*, established in *brahman*; whose conduct never lapses; free of faults such as hypocrisy, arrogance, deceit, cunning, trickery, envy, falsehood, egotism and possessiveness; whose sole aim is to help others; and who wishes to put his knowledge to use. He should first teach the scriptural texts whose aim is to show the unity of the self, such as: "In the beginning, my dear, this was being alone, one only, without a second," "where one sees noth-

2 *Brahman*: the absolute, the ground of all. Quotations: Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.12–13; Chandogya Upanishad 3.11.6, 6.14.2, 4.9.3; Bhagavad Gita 4.34.

3 The restraints (*yama*: nonviolence, truthfulness and the like) and observances (*niyama*: purity, contentment and the like) are the first two limbs of yoga discipline.

4 The list of qualities beginning with humility is in Bhagavad Gita 13.7–11.

ing else," "The self alone is all this," "In the beginning this was the self alone, one only," "All this is indeed *brahman*."[5]

P 1.7 Having taught these, he should make him grasp the defining marks of *brahman* through scriptural texts such as: "the self that is free from evil," "the *brahman* that is immediate and direct," "that which is beyond hunger and thirst," "not this, not this," "not coarse, not fine," "That self is not this, not this," "unseen, the seer," "*Brahman* is awareness and bliss," "*Brahman* is truth, knowledge, the infinite," "in what is invisible, bodiless, indefinable," "this great unborn self," "without breath, without mind," "unborn, without and within," "nothing but a mass of awareness," "without inside, without outside," "It is other than the known, and beyond the unknown," "What is called space ..."[6]

P 1.8 And through traditional texts such as: "is never born, never dies," "takes on no one's evil," "just as it always rests in space," "Know me also as the knower of the field," "It is said to be neither being nor non-being," "because it is without beginning and without qualities," "the same in all beings," "But the highest person is another"—texts which do not conflict with the marks stated in scripture, and whose aim is to show that the highest self is not subject to the round of rebirth and that it is not different from anything.[7]

WHO ARE YOU?

The teacher asks the pupil who he is: caste, family and rites belong to the body, not the self.

P 1.9 When the pupil has thus grasped, through scripture and tradition, the defining marks of the highest self, and wishes to

5 *Ātman* ("the self"): one's own inmost being, the witness that is pure awareness. Quotations: Chandogya Upanishad 6.2.1, 7.24.1, 7.25.2; Aitareya Upanishad 1.1.1; Chandogya 3.14.1.

6 "Not this, not this": the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad's formula for *brahman* (2.3.6). The other quotations come from the Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Taittiriya, Mundaka and Kena Upanishads.

7 These are from the Bhagavad Gita (2.20, 5.15, 9.6, 13.2, 13.12, 13.31, 13.27, 15.17).

cross the ocean of the round of rebirth, the teacher should ask him: Who are you, my dear?

P 1.10 If he should say: I am the son of a Brahmin, of such-and-such a family; I was a celibate student, or a householder, and now I am a renunciant of the highest order, wishing to cross the ocean of the round of rebirth, whose great crocodiles are birth and death—[8]

P 1.11 The teacher should say: My dear, when you die, your body will be eaten by birds or turn to earth right here. How then do you hope to rise out of the ocean of the round of rebirth? For once you are burned to ashes on the near bank of the river, you will not cross to its far side.

P 1.12 If he should say: I am different from the body. The body is born, dies, is eaten by birds, turns to earth, is destroyed by weapons, fire and the like, and is afflicted by disease and the like. I have entered it, by force of the merit and demerit I myself have produced, as a bird enters a nest; and again and again, whenever the body perishes, I shall go to another body by force of merit and demerit, as a bird goes to another nest when its former nest is destroyed. In just this way, in the beginningless round of rebirth, in the conditions of gods, humans, animals and the hells, I have been giving up, by force of my own action, each body I took on, and taking up one new body after another; whirled by my own action on the wheel of the unbroken series of births and deaths like a water wheel, I have in due course reached this body; and, weary of whirling on this wheel of the round of rebirth, I have come to you, venerable sir, to bring that whirling to an end. Therefore I am eternal, different from the body.[9] Bodies come and go, like a person's clothes.

P 1.13 The teacher should say: You have spoken well; you see rightly. Why then did you speak falsely, saying: I am the son of a

8 The celibate student (*brahmacārin*) and the householder are the first two of the four stages of life; the forest-dweller and the renunciant are the other two.

9 The water wheel (*ghaṭīyantra*) has pots tied to its rim, which rise and fall without end.

Brahmin, of such-and-such a family; I was a celibate student, or a householder, and now I am a renunciant of the highest order?

P 1.14 If he should say: Venerable sir, how have I spoken falsely?

P 1.15 The teacher should say to him: Because by the statement "I am the son of a Brahmin, of such-and-such a family," and the rest, you identified the self, which is free of caste, family and rites, with the body, which is different and has caste, family and rites.

P 1.16 If he should ask: How is the body different, with caste, family and rites? And how am I free of caste, family and rites?

P 1.17 The teacher should say: Listen, my dear, to just how this body is different from you and has caste, family and rites, and how you are free of caste, family and rites. Having said this, he should remind him: You should remember, my dear, the highest self, the self of all, with the marks described; you have heard of it through scriptural texts such as "Being alone, my dear, was this ...," and through traditional texts, and you have heard its defining marks through scripture and tradition.

P 1.18 To bring back to his memory the marks of the highest self he has learned, he should say: That which is called space, which is other than name and form, bodiless, marked by being not coarse and so on and by being free from evil and so on, untouched by any of the attributes of the round of rebirth, the *brahman* that is immediate and direct—this is your self, within all; unseen, the seer; unheard, the hearer; unthought, the thinker; unknown, the knower; whose very nature is eternal awareness; without inside, without outside; nothing but a mass of awareness; all-filling, like space; of infinite power; the self of all; free from hunger and the like, and free from appearing and disappearing. By its mere existence, known to itself alone, because its power is inconceivable, it makes manifest the unmanifest name and form, which are different from itself, are the seed of the world, rest in it, and cannot be described either as it or as other than it.[10]

10 Name and form (*nāmarūpa*): the world of distinct, named things, which before creation lies unmanifest, like a seed.

P 1.19 That name and form, unmanifest, while being made manifest, took from this self the name and shape of space. And the element called space arose from the highest self in this way, as foam, a kind of impurity, arises from clear water. Foam is neither water nor wholly different from water, since it is not seen apart from water; but the water is clear and different from the foam, which is of the nature of impurity. In the same way the highest self is different from name and form, which correspond to the foam: it is pure, clear and of a different nature. That name and form, unmanifest, while being made manifest, took on, like the foam, the name and shape of space.[11]

P 1.20 Then name and form, becoming coarser still as they were made manifest, became wind; from that, fire; from fire, water; and from water, earth. In this order, each preceding element entering into each succeeding one, the five great elements, ending with earth, came into being. Hence earth is marked by five qualities. From earth arise the plants, rice, barley and the rest, made of the five elements. From these, when they are eaten, arise blood and semen, belonging to the bodies of woman and man. Both of these, churned out by the churning stick of desire impelled by ignorance, and consecrated with sacred formulas, are poured into the womb at the proper season. Growing by absorbing the fluids of its womb, it becomes an embryo and is born in the ninth or tenth month.[12]

P 1.21 Once born, it obtains a name and shape and is consecrated with sacred formulas through the birth rite and the others; then, through the rite of initiation, it is given the name "celibate student." That same body, through the rite of union with a wife, is given the name "householder." That same body, through the rite of forest-dwelling, is given the name "ascetic." That same body, through the rite occasioned by ceasing from action, is

11 Space (*ākāśa*) is the first and subtlest of the five elements.
12 Ignorance (*avidyā*) is not a lack of facts but the misidentification of the self with what it is not.

given the name "renunciant." In this way the body is different from you and has caste, family and rites.[13]

P 1.22 The mind and the senses, too, consist only of name and form, according to scriptural texts such as "For the mind, my dear, is made of food."[14]

P 1.23 And as for how you are free of caste, family and rites, listen to this: He who makes manifest name and form, and whose nature is different from the attributes of name and form—he himself, making manifest name and form and creating this body, himself free of rites and such attributes, has entered here into name and form; unseen by others, he himself sees; likewise unheard, he hears; unthought, he thinks; unknown, he knows; and having distinguished all forms and made names, the wise one abides, speaking them. There are thousands of scriptural texts on this point: "Having created it,[15] he entered into it," "Having entered within, the ruler of creatures," "He has entered here," "This is your self," "Splitting open this very suture, he entered by that door," "This self, hidden in all beings," "That deity thought, 'Well, let me ... these three deities,'" and other such scriptural texts.[16]

P 1.24 Traditional texts too, such as: "The self alone is all the gods," "the embodied one in the city of nine gates," "Know me also as the knower of the field," "the same in all beings," "the onlooker and the one who consents," "But the highest person is another," "bodiless among bodies." Therefore it is established that you are free of caste, family and rites.[17]

P 1.25 If he should say: I am one thing—ignorant, feeling pleasure and pain, bound, subject to the round of rebirth—and he is

13 The birth rite and initiation, when a boy receives the sacred thread and begins Vedic study, are among the life-cycle rites (*saṃskāra*).

14 Chandogya Upanishad 6.5.4.

15 The line about the wise one who distinguishes forms and makes names is from Taittiriya Aranyaka 3.12.7.

16 Taittiriya Upanishad 2.6.1; Taittiriya Aranyaka 3.11.1; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.7, 3.4.1; Aitareya Upanishad 1.3.12; Katha Upanishad 3.12; Chandogya Upanishad 6.3.2.

17 The "city of nine gates" is the body with its nine openings. Sources: Manu 12.119; Bhagavad Gita 5.13, 13.22; Katha Upanishad 2.22.

another, different from me, not subject to the round of rebirth, a god. By worshipping him with oblations, offerings, salutations and the like, and with the actions prescribed for my class and stage of life, I wish to cross the ocean of the round of rebirth. How can I be he?[18]

P 1.26 The teacher should say: My dear, you should not understand it so, for the notion of difference is forbidden. As to how the notion of difference is forbidden, he says: "'He is one, I am another'—he does not know," "*Brahman* forsakes whoever knows *brahman* as elsewhere than in the self," "He goes from death to death who sees as if there were diversity here," and other such texts.[19]

P 1.27 These very scriptural texts show that the notion of difference leads into the round of rebirth.

P 1.28 And in thousands of passages they show that liberation comes from the notion of non-difference. Having established the state of being the highest self with "That is the self; you are that," and having said "A person who has a teacher knows," they show with "For him the delay lasts only so long" that liberation comes from the knowledge of non-difference alone. Through the example of the man true to his word who, not being a thief, is not burned, they show the absence of the round of rebirth. Through the example of the thief who is burned, they show that one untrue to his word, because he sees difference, goes on in the round of rebirth.[20]

P 1.29 And with the passage beginning "Whatever they are here, tiger or ...," and after saying that through seeing non-difference "he becomes self-ruling," they show in every Vedic branch that through its opposite, seeing difference, one goes on in the round of rebirth: "But those who know otherwise are ruled by another and have worlds that perish." Therefore you spoke falsely in saying that you are the son of a Brahmin, of such-and-such a family,

18 Class (*varṇa*) refers to the four social classes, stage of life (*āśrama*) to the four stages from student to renunciant.
19 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10, 2.4.6; Katha Upanishad 4.10.
20 "You are that": Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.7. In Chandogya 6.16 a man accused of theft grasps a heated axe; if he is innocent and his word true, he is not burned.

one subject to the round of rebirth, different from the highest self.[21]

P 1.30 Therefore—since seeing difference is forbidden, since taking up action has difference as its sphere, and since the sacred thread and the like are means of action—it should be understood that the notion of non-difference from the highest self forbids taking up action and its means; for actions and their means, the sacred thread and the like, contradict the notion of non-difference from the highest self. For actions and their means, the sacred thread and the like, are enjoined for one subject to the round of rebirth, not for one who sees his non-difference from the highest self. And it is merely through seeing difference that one is other than it.[22]

P 1.31 If actions were to be performed and were not meant to be given up, scripture would not have declared, in such definite statements as "That is the self; you are that," that one's self is not different from the highest self, which has no connection with the means of action, nor with caste, stage of life and the rest that occasion action; nor would it have condemned the notion of difference with such passages as "This is the eternal greatness of the Brahmin," "untouched by good, untouched by evil," "Here a thief is no thief."[23]

P 1.32 Nor would it have declared that the self's nature has no connection with action, nor with class and the rest that occasion action, if actions and their means, the sacred thread and the like, were not meant to be given up. Therefore one who seeks liberation should give up action together with its means, since it contradicts seeing non-difference from the highest self. And the self should be understood to be the highest self itself, with the marks stated in scripture.

21 Chandogya Upanishad 6.9.3, 7.25.2. A branch (*śākhā*) is a school of Vedic recitation with its own recension of the text.
22 The sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*), worn by initiated men of the three upper classes, is required for performing Vedic ritual.
23 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.23, 4.3.22.

PAIN, RITUAL AND THE ONE SELF

The teacher places pain in the body, not the knower, and traces all difference to ignorance.

P 1.33 If he should say: Venerable sir, when the body is burned or cut I directly perceive pain, and I directly perceive suffering caused by hunger and the like. But this highest self is heard in all scripture and tradition to be free from evil, free from aging, free from death, free from sorrow, free from hunger and thirst, and devoid of all smell and taste. How could I, who am different from it and joined with the many attributes of the round of rebirth, understand the highest self as my self, and myself, subject to the round of rebirth, as the highest self—as though I took fire to be cold? And since, being subject to the round of rebirth, I am qualified for the means to all prosperity and the highest good, how could I give up actions, which are the means to prosperity and the highest good, and their means, the sacred thread and the like?

P 1.34 He should say to him: What you said—that when the body is burned or cut, pain is directly perceived as yours—is not correct. Why? Because the pain of burning and cutting is perceived in the body, an object perceived by the perceiver, just as in a tree being burned or cut; so the pain has the same locus as the burning and the rest. For people speak of the pain of burning and the like as being just where the burning or cutting is done, not in the perceiver of the burning and the rest. How so? Asked, "Where is your pain?", one points to just where the burning and the rest are: "The pain is in my head," or "in my chest," or "in my belly"—not to the perceiver. If pain, or burning, cutting and the like that cause pain, were in the perceiver, one would point to it as the seat of pain, just as one points to the seat of the burning and the rest.

P 1.35 And the pain itself would not be perceived, just as the color in the eye is not. Therefore, since pain is perceived as having the same locus as burning, cutting and the like, it is an

object, like burning and the rest. And because it is something existent, it has a locus, like the cooking of rice. The impression left by pain has the same locus as the pain, since it is perceived only together with the memory of it. Aversion, too, whose object is pain or its cause, has the same locus as the impression. And so it has been said: "Since attachment, aversion and fear are perceived as having the same locus as the impressions of forms, they rest in the intellect; therefore the knower is always pure and free of fear."

P 1.36 What, then, is the locus of the impressions of forms and the like? It is answered: where desire and the like are. And where are desire and the like? In the intellect alone, according to the scriptural text "Desire, intention, doubt ..." The impressions of forms and the like are there too, according to the text "'On what are forms based?' 'On the heart.'" From hundreds of scriptural texts such as "the desires that dwell in his heart," "For then he has crossed all the sorrows of the heart," "For this one is unattached," "That is his form beyond desires," and from traditional texts such as "It is said to be unchangeable," "because it is without beginning and without qualities"—and those which say that desire, aversion and the like are attributes of the field, the object, and not of the self—it follows that impurity resides in the object, not in the self.[24]

P 1.37 Therefore, since you have no connection with the impurity of the impressions of forms and the like, you are not different from the highest self; and since this does not conflict with perception and the rest, it is right to understand "I am the highest self itself," according to scriptural texts such as: "It knew only itself: 'I am *brahman*,'" "It is to be seen as one only," "I am below," "The self is below," "He should see everything as the self," "But when for him everything has become the self," "All this is this self," "He is without parts," "without inside, without outside," "unborn, without and within," "All this is *brahman*," "He entered by this door," "names of intelligence," "*Brahman* is truth, know-

24 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.5.3, 3.9.20, 4.4.7, 4.3.22, 4.3.15, 4.3.21; Bhagavad Gita 2.25, 13.31. The "field" is the body and mind, as in Gita 13.6.

ledge, the infinite," "From that, indeed," "Having created it, he entered into it," "the one god, hidden in all beings, all-pervading," "bodiless among bodies," "is never born, never dies," "the state of dream and the state of waking," "He should know, 'He is my self,'" "But one who ... all beings," "It moves; it does not move," "Vena, seeing that," "That alone is fire," "I became Manu and the sun," "Having entered within, the ruler of creatures," "Being alone, my dear ...," "That is the truth; that is the self; you are that."[25]

P 1.38 And from traditional texts such as "All living beings are the city of the one who lies in the cave," "The self alone is the gods," "in the city of nine gates," "the same in all beings," "in one endowed with learning and humility," "undivided among the divided," "Vasudeva is all," it is established that you are the one self alone, the highest *brahman*, free from all the attributes of the round of rebirth.[26]

P 1.39 If he should say: Venerable sir, if the self is without inside, without outside, unborn, without and within, entire, nothing but a mass of intelligence like a lump of salt, free of all differences of shape, of a single nature like space—what, then, is this that is seen or heard: the end to be achieved, the means, and the one who achieves it, well known from scripture, tradition and the world, and the subject of disagreement among hundreds of disputants?[27]

P 1.40 The teacher should say: What is seen or heard—the end, the means and the one who achieves it—is produced by ignorance. In the highest truth there is only the one self, which, through the vision of ignorance, appears as though many, as the moon appears as many to vision affected by an eye disease. Duality is produced by ignorance, as is shown by the condemna-

25 Vena is a Vedic seer; Manu is the first human. The quotations come chiefly from the Brihadaranyaka, Chandogya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Katha, Isha and Shvetashvatara Upanishads.

26 Vasudeva is Krishna. Sources include Apastamba Dharmasutra 1.8.22.4 and Bhagavad Gita 5.18, 13.16, 7.19.

27 The lump of salt, salty through and through, is an image from Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.5.13.

tion of seeing difference in such texts as “Where there seems to be another,” “For where there is duality, as it were, there one sees another,” “He goes from death to death,” “But where one sees something else, hears something else, knows something else, that is the small,” “And what is small is mortal,” “A modification is a name, a matter of words,” “untrue,” “He is one, I am another,” and by the texts enjoining oneness, such as “one only, without a second,” “But when for him ...,” “What delusion, what sorrow ...”[28]

P 1.41 If that is so, venerable sir, why does scripture speak of the differences of end, means and so on, and of origination and dissolution?

P 1.42 To this it is replied: Consider a person who has ignorance, who has taken on the distinctions of body and the rest, who thinks of himself as connected with what he desires and what he does not, who does not know how to discern the ways of attaining the desired and avoiding the undesired except through means, and who wishes to attain the desired and avoid the undesired. In order gradually to remove his ignorance in this matter, scripture does not enjoin the differences of end, means and so on; for that is the round of rebirth, whose nature is the undesired. Rather, it uproots that very ignorance, the view of difference, the root of the round of rebirth, by showing that origination, dissolution and the rest are consistent with oneness.

P 1.43 When ignorance has been uprooted through scripture, tradition and reasoning, the single insight of one who sees the highest truth becomes established in this alone: the self is without inside, without outside, unborn, without and within, nothing but a mass of intelligence like a lump of salt, of a single nature, all-filling like space; and not even a trace of impurity, through the differences of end, means, origination, dissolution and so on, is possible.

P 1.44 One who wishes to attain this vision of the highest truth must turn away from the desires for a son, for wealth and the

28 *Timira* is an eye disease that makes one see double. Sources: Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.31, 2.4.14; Chandogya Upanishad 7.24.1, 6.1.4; Isha Upanishad 7.

rest, which are fivefold in form and produced by identifying oneself with class, stage of life and the like. Such identification conflicts with right cognition, and so the purpose of scripture's denial of seeing difference also makes sense. For when the notion that the one self is free of the round of rebirth has arisen through scripture and reasoning, the contrary notion does not arise—just as one does not think that fire is cold, or that the body is free of old age and death. Therefore, since all actions and their means, the sacred thread and the like, are effects of ignorance, one devoted to the vision of the highest truth must give them up.[29]

CHAPTER 2: AWARENESS OF THE CHANGELESS, NONDUAL SELF

A pupil asks how to escape birth and death; the teacher names ignorance as the cause.

P 2.1 A certain celibate student, weary of the round of rebirth marked by birth, old age and death, and seeking liberation, approached in the proper manner a Brahmin established in *brahman*, who was sitting at ease, and asked him: Venerable sir, how shall I be freed from the round of rebirth? I am bound up with a body, senses, objects and feelings. In waking I experience pain, and in dream as well. Again and again I pass into deep sleep and rest, and again and again I experience the pain of waking and dream. Is this my own nature? Or is it caused by something, while my nature is other? If this is my own nature, I have no hope of liberation, since one cannot escape one's own nature. But if it is caused, liberation is possible once the cause is removed.

P 2.2 The teacher said to him: Listen, my child. This is not your own nature; it is caused.

P 2.3 Told this, the pupil said: What is the cause? And what removes it? And what is my own nature, so that, when the cause

29 Fivefold: the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (1.4.17) describes the ritual life as fivefold—mind, speech, breath, wife and son—like the sacrifice itself.

is removed, what it caused will cease, and I may regain my own nature, like a sick man when the cause of his illness is removed?

P 2.4 The teacher said: Ignorance is the cause; knowledge removes it. When ignorance is removed, its effect will be gone, and you will be freed from the round of rebirth marked by birth and death, and you will no longer experience the pain of dream and waking.

P 2.5 The pupil said: What is that ignorance? What is its object? And what is the knowledge that removes ignorance, through which I may regain my own nature?

P 2.6 The teacher said: You are the highest self, free from the round of rebirth, yet you wrongly take yourself to be "I, who am subject to the round of rebirth"; you are not an agent, yet you take yourself to be an agent; you are not an enjoyer, yet you take yourself to be an enjoyer; and you exist, yet you take yourself not to exist. This is ignorance.

SUPERIMPOSITION

The pupil doubts the self can be superimposed; the teacher shows body and self are always confused.

P 2.7 The pupil said: Even if I exist, still I am not the highest self. The round of rebirth, marked by being an agent and an enjoyer, is my own nature, since it is experienced through the means of knowledge, perception and the rest. It is not caused by ignorance, because ignorance cannot have the self as its object. Ignorance is the superimposition of the attributes of one thing on another: as one superimposes known silver on known mother-of-pearl, or a known person on a post, or a known post on a person—not something unknown on something known, nor something known on something unknown. And one does not superimpose the non-self on the self, because the self is not known; nor the self on the non-self, again because the self is not known.[30]

30 Superimposition (*adhyāropaṇa*): taking one thing for another, as silver on mother-of-pearl or a snake on a rope.

P 2.8 The teacher said to him: No, because there are exceptions. My child, it cannot be laid down as a rule that one superimposes the known only on the known, for superimposition on the self is seen: the attributes of the body, as in "I am fair" or "I am dark," are superimposed on the self, the object of the notion "I"; and the self, the object of the notion "I," is superimposed on the body, as in "I am this."

P 2.9 The pupil said: Then the self is indeed known, as the object of the notion "I," and the body as "this." That being so, the mutual superimposition of body and self is of two known things, like that of post and person, or of mother-of-pearl and silver. On what particular point, then, did you, venerable sir, say that it cannot be laid down as a rule that mutual superimposition is of two known things?

P 2.10 The teacher said: Listen. It is true that body and self are known. But they are not known to everyone as objects of distinct notions, as post and person are. How, then? They are always known as the object of a single, continuous notion in which they are not distinguished. For no one grasps body and self through two distinct notions, "This is the body" and "This is the self." That is precisely why people are thoroughly confused about self and non-self, saying "The self is like this" and "The self is not like this." It was on this particular point that I said it cannot be laid down as a rule.

P 2.11 But surely, whatever is superimposed by ignorance on something is seen to be unreal there—like silver on mother-of-pearl, a person on a post, a snake on a rope, a surface and dirtiness on space, and so on. In the same way, if body and self were always mutually superimposed through a continuous, undistinguished notion, then each would always be unreal in the other. Just as silver and the rest, superimposed by ignorance on mother-of-pearl and the rest, are always utterly unreal, and likewise their opposites on their opposites, so the mutual superimposition of body and self would be made by ignorance alone. That being so, it would follow that body and self are unreal. And

that is unacceptable, for it is the position of the Vaināśikas.[31] If, conversely, the body is superimposed by ignorance on the self, it would follow that the body is unreal in the self, which is real. And that is unacceptable, since it contradicts perception and the rest. Therefore body and self are not superimposed on each other by ignorance. How, then? They are permanently joined, like bamboo and post.

P 2.12 No, for then it would follow that they are impermanent and exist for the sake of another. Because they are combined, they would exist for the sake of another and be impermanent, just like bamboo, post and the like. Moreover, the self that others imagine to be combined with the body exists, because it is combined, for the sake of another. Therefore one that is highest and different, not combined and eternal, is established in the first place.

P 2.13 Since that uncombined one is superimposed on the body as being the body itself, the faults of unreality, impermanence and the rest follow. Then there would be the fault of arriving at the Vaināśika position, that the body has no self.

P 2.14 No, for it is accepted that the self, by its own nature, is not combined with anything, like space. Though uncombined with everything, it is the self, and so the body and all the rest are not without a self. Just as space is uncombined with everything and yet nothing is without space—so it is here. Therefore there is no fault of arriving at the Vaināśika position.

P 2.15 As for what was said further—that if the body did not exist in the self, perception and the rest would be contradicted—that is not so, for perception and the rest do not apprehend the body as existing in the self. The body is not apprehended in the self by perception and the rest as a jujube is in a bowl, ghee in milk, oil in sesame, or a picture on a wall. Therefore there is no contradiction of perception and the rest.

31 The "surface" of space is the sky's apparent vault. *Vaināśika*, "one who holds that things perish," is Shankara's name for Buddhists who deny a lasting self.

P 2.16 How, then, is the body superimposed on the self, which is not known through perception and the rest, and the self on the body?

P 2.17 This is no fault, because the self is known by its very nature. It cannot be laid down as a rule that superimposition occurs only on what is known occasionally and not on what is always known, for we see a surface, dirt and the like superimposed on space.

P 2.18 Venerable sir, is the mutual superimposition of body and self made by the aggregate of body and the rest, or by the self?

P 2.19 The teacher said: Whether it is made by the aggregate of body and the rest or by the self, what would follow?

P 2.20 Told this, the pupil said: If I am merely the aggregate of body and the rest, then, since I am not conscious, I exist for the sake of another, and so the mutual superimposition of body and self is not made by me. But if I am the self, the highest, different from the aggregate, then, since I am conscious, I exist for my own sake, and so it is I, the conscious one, who make the superimposition on the self that is the seed of every evil.

P 2.21 Told this, the teacher said: If you know that false superimposition is the seed of evil, then do not make it.

P 2.22 Venerable sir, I simply cannot help making it. I am impelled by someone else; I am not independent.

P 2.23 Then, because you are not conscious, you do not exist for your own sake. The one by whom you are impelled, so that you act without independence, is the conscious one, who exists for his own sake. You are only the aggregate.

P 2.24 If I am not conscious, how do I know the feeling of pleasure and pain, and what you have said?

P 2.25 The teacher said: Are you different from the feeling of pleasure and pain and from what I have said, or are you not different?

P 2.26 The pupil said: I am certainly not non-different. Why? Because I know both of them as objects, as I know a pot and the like. If I were not different, I could not know them; but I do know them; therefore I am different. If I were not different, the

change that is the feeling of pleasure and pain would exist for its own sake, and so would what you have said. But it is not reasonable that they should exist for their own sake. The pleasure and pain produced by sandalwood and a thorn are not for the sake of the sandalwood or the thorn, nor is the use of a pot for the sake of the pot. Therefore the purpose served by sandalwood and the rest is for me, who know them. For I, being different from them, know every object that has entered the intellect.

P 2.27 The teacher said to him: Then you exist for your own sake, because you are conscious, and you are not impelled by another. For a conscious being is not dependent and impelled by another, since one conscious being cannot exist for the sake of another conscious being, the two being equal, like the light of two lamps. Nor does a conscious being exist for the sake of what is not conscious, since what is not conscious, precisely because it is not conscious, can have no relation to a purpose of its own. Nor are two things that are not conscious seen to exist for each other's sake: wood and a wall do not serve each other's purpose.

P 2.28 But surely, though equal in being conscious, servant and master are seen to exist for each other's sake.

P 2.29 Not so, for what I meant was that your consciousness is like the heat and light of fire. And I gave the example of the light of two lamps. That being so, you perceive everything that has entered your own intellect through your own nature, which is changeless, eternal consciousness, comparable to the heat and light of fire. And if you thus accept that the self is always without distinctions, why did you say: "Resting again and again in deep sleep, I experience pain in waking and dream. Is this my own nature, or is it caused?" Has that delusion gone, or not?[32]

32 *Kūṭastha*, "changeless": literally, unchanging like an anvil, which stays the same while everything is shaped upon it.

THE CHANGELESS PERCEIVER

The pupil doubts that a perceiving self is changeless; perceiving proves to be its unchanging nature.

P 2.30 Told this, the pupil said: Venerable sir, by your grace it has gone. But I have a doubt about my being changeless. How so? Sound and the rest are not established by themselves, since they are not conscious; they are established through the arising of notions that take the forms of sound and the rest. For notions, which are qualified by mutually exclusive features and have forms such as blue and yellow, cannot be established by themselves. From this it is understood that they are caused by external forms, and so it is established that they have the forms of sound and the rest, as the external forms do. Likewise notions too, the various things supported by the notion "I," are not conscious, because they are combined; since they cannot exist for their own sake, they are established, just like sound and the rest, by being grasped by a grasper different from themselves. And since I am not combined and am of the nature of consciousness, I exist for my own sake; yet I perceive the notions of the "I," which have forms such as blue and yellow, and so I am indeed subject to change. How, then, am I changeless? That is my doubt.

P 2.31 The teacher said to him: Your doubt is not reasonable. For you cite as the cause of doubt the very thing that is the cause of certainty in establishing your changelessness: your perceiving all the movements of the mind without exception, which shows that you are not transformed, since you invariably perceive those notions in their entirety. If you were subject to transformation, you would not perceive all the movements of the mind, your object, without exception—just as the mind does not with its own object, nor the senses with theirs. And you, the self, do not in that way perceive only part of your object. Therefore you are simply changeless.

P 2.32 On this he said: Perceiving, being the meaning of a verbal root, is itself a change; and it is contradictory that the perceiver should be changeless by nature.[33]

P 2.33 No, because the word "perceiving" is applied figuratively to the change that is the meaning of the root. The notion in the intellect, which is the meaning of the root and is of the nature of change, ends in a result that is a semblance of the self's perceiving; and so it is figuratively called by the word "perceiving"—just as the action of cutting, which ends in the result of something's being split in two, is figuratively spoken of as the meaning of the root.

P 2.34 Told this, the pupil said: But surely, venerable sir, the example does not serve to establish my changelessness. How so? Just as cutting, which ends in a change in the thing cut, is figuratively spoken of as the meaning of the root, so too the notion in the intellect, the meaning of the root figuratively called by the word "perceiving": if it ends in a change in the self, namely perceiving, it cannot serve to establish the self's changelessness.

P 2.35 The teacher said: That would indeed be so if there were a distinction between perceiving and perceiver. But the perceiver is nothing but eternal perceiving. It is not as in the doctrine of the logicians, where perceiving is one thing and the perceiver another.[34]

P 2.36 But how is it that the meaning of the root ends in the result that is perceiving?

P 2.37 Here is the answer; listen. I said that it ends in a result that is a semblance of perceiving. Did you not hear that? I did not say that it ends in producing a change in the self.

P 2.38 The pupil said: How, then, did you say that I, who am changeless, perceive all the movements of the mind, which are my objects?

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33 The "meaning of the verbal root" (*dhātvartha*) is, in Sanskrit grammar, the action a verb denotes.

34 The logicians (*tārkika*) are the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools, for whom cognition is a quality that arises in a self distinct from it.

P 2.39 The teacher said to him: What I said was true, and by that very fact I declared your changelessness.

P 2.40 If so, venerable sir, since I am by nature changeless, eternal perceiving, and the notions in the intellect that take the forms of sound and the rest arise ending in a result that is a semblance of my own nature as perceiving, what fault is mine?

P 2.41 True, there is no fault. But, as I said before, the fault is only ignorance.

P 2.42 Venerable sir, if, as in deep sleep, there is no change in me, how is it in dream and waking?

P 2.43 The teacher said to him: But do you experience them continuously?

P 2.44 The pupil said: Certainly I experience them, but intermittently, not continuously.

P 2.45 The teacher said: Then they are adventitious, not your very self. If they were your very self, they would be established by themselves and continuous, like your nature as consciousness. Moreover, dream and waking are not your very self, because they depart from you, like clothes and the like. For what is the nature of a thing is never seen to depart from it. But dream and waking depart from you, who are consciousness alone. If your own nature departed in deep sleep, it would have to be negated as "destroyed" or "nonexistent," for adventitious things, which do not belong to one's nature, are seen to be of these two kinds: wealth, clothes and the like are seen to be destroyed, while things gained in the delusion of dream are seen to be nonexistent.

P 2.46 But surely, venerable sir, in that case my nature as consciousness, too, turns out to be adventitious, since it is not perceived in deep sleep, just as dream and waking are not. Or else I would be of a nature that is not conscious.

P 2.47 No. Look: that is not tenable. If you regard your nature as consciousness as adventitious—look, we could not make sense of that by reasoning even in a hundred years, nor could anyone else, even one who is not conscious. For what is combined, no reasoning can prevent its existing for another's sake, its being

many and its perishing, since what does not exist for its own sake is not established by itself—as we have said. But for the self whose nature is consciousness, being established by itself, nothing can prevent its independence of anything else, because it never departs.

P 2.48 But surely I have shown that it does depart: in deep sleep I do not see.

P 2.49 No, because that is self-contradictory. How is it contradictory? You are seeing, and yet you say "I do not see": the statement contradicts itself. But never, venerable sir, have I seen consciousness or anything else in deep sleep. Then you are seeing in deep sleep, for you deny only what is seen, not the seeing. What I have called consciousness is your seeing. That seeing, by whose presence you deny, saying "nothing was seen"—that seeing is consciousness. Then, since it never departs from anything, its changeless eternity is established by itself, without depending on a means of knowledge. For a knower who is established by himself needs a means of knowledge to determine an object of knowledge other than himself. But that other, eternal cognition, which is required to determine something else that is not of the nature of cognition—it is eternal, changeless, self-luminous by nature. Whether it serves in the self as means of knowledge or as knower, it needs no means of knowledge for itself, since that is its very nature. Just as iron, water and the like depend on something else, fire, the sun and the like, for light or heat, since these are not their nature; but fire, the sun and the like do not depend on anything for them, since these are always their nature.

KNOWING THAT NEEDS NO PROOF

Realization is eternal and needs no means of knowledge; the pupil is declared free.

P 2.50 If you say that knowing would be valid knowledge only if it were transient, and not if it were eternal—

P 2.51 No, because no distinction can be drawn between realization that is eternal and realization that is transient. Where realization is valid knowledge, no such distinction as "transient realization is valid knowledge, eternal realization is not" is known.

P 2.52 If you say that the distinction would be this: when realization is eternal, the knower depends on nothing, but when it is transient, realization has to be sought, because effort stands between him and it—

P 2.53 Then it is established that the self, the knower, is self-established, precisely because it does not depend on any means of knowledge.

P 2.54 If you say that even when realization is absent there is no dependence, because the self is eternal—

P 2.55 No, for realization itself exists in the self. This has already been answered. If the knower depended on a means of knowledge to be established, whose would the desire to know be? The one who has the desire to know is accepted as the knower. His desire to know has the knowable as its object, not the knower. If it had the knower as its object, an infinite regress would follow: there would be another knower of that knower and of his desire, and yet another of that one. The same regress would follow if the desire itself were directed to the knower. And because nothing stands between the self, the knower, and itself, it cannot be an object of knowledge. In the world an object of knowledge is established only when it is set apart from the knower by the arising of desire, memory, effort and a means of knowledge, and not otherwise. Realization is seen to have the knowable as its object. Nor can the knower be imagined to be set apart from himself by anything at all, as if he were his own knower, not even by one of desire and the rest. Memory has what is to be remembered as its object, not the one who remembers. Likewise desire has only what is desired as its object, not the one who desires. Even if they had the one who remembers and the one who desires as their objects, the infinite regress would be unavoidable in both cases, as before.

P 2.56 If you say that, if no realization arises that has the knower as its object, the knower would remain unknown—

P 2.57 No, because the realization of the one who realizes has what is to be realized as its object. If it had the one who realizes as its object, there would be an infinite regress, as before. Realization, the changeless and eternal light of the self, is established in the self without depending on anything else, like the heat and light of fire or the sun. This has already been shown. If realization, the light of the self that is consciousness, were transient in the self, the self could not exist for its own sake. Being composite, like the aggregate of body and senses, it would exist for the sake of another and be subject to defects, as we have said. How so? If the light of the self that is consciousness were transient in the self, it would be interrupted, because memory and the rest would come between. That light of consciousness would then be absent from the self before it arose and after it perished. So the self would be composite like the eye and the other senses, and it would exist for the sake of another. And even when that light has arisen and exists in the self, the self would not then exist for its own sake. Whether the self exists for its own sake and the non-self for the sake of another is settled by the presence or absence of that light. Therefore it is established that the self is the light of eternal consciousness, independent of anything else.

P 2.58 But if this is so, and the self is not the seat of valid knowledge, how can the knower be a knower?

P 2.59 The answer is: valid knowledge has no difference of form whether it is eternal or transient. Valid knowledge is realization. Realization that is transient and preceded by memory, desire and the rest does not differ in its nature from realization that is changeless and eternal. Take the result denoted by a verbal root such as “stand.” It has no difference of form whether it is transient and preceded by motion and the like, or eternal and preceded by nothing. So we see the same expression used in “people stand,” “mountains stand,” and so on. In the same way, there is no contradiction in calling the knower a knower, even

though his nature is eternal realization, because the result is the same.

P 2.60 Here the pupil said: The self, whose nature is eternal realization, is free of change. So it cannot be an agent without being combined with body and senses, as a carpenter and others are agents with an adze and other tools. And if what is by nature uncombined were to take up body and senses, an infinite regress would follow. A carpenter and the like, however, are always already combined with body and senses, so no regress arises when they take up an adze and the rest.

P 2.61 In this case, though, one whose nature is uncombined cannot be an agent without taking up an instrument, so an instrument must be taken up. But taking it up is itself a change. So for that act another instrument must be taken up, and for taking that up yet another. If the knower is independent, then, the regress is unavoidable. Nor can action itself make the self act, since an action not yet brought about has no nature of its own. If you say that something else approaches the self and makes it act —no, because self-establishment, not being an object, and the like are impossible for anything other than the self. No unconscious thing other than the self has ever been seen to be its own means of knowledge. Sound and everything else would be established only as known by a cognition that ends in realization as its result. If realization belonged to something other than the self, that too would be the self: uncombined, existing for its own sake and not for another's. We cannot regard the body, the senses or their objects as existing for their own sake, because we see that they are established only by depending on cognitions that end in realization.

P 2.62 But surely, to know the body no one depends on any further cognition such as perception.

P 2.63 Quite so, but only in the waking state. In death and in deep sleep, even the body is established only by depending on means of knowledge such as perception, and so are the senses. Sound and the rest are external, and they have been transformed into the shapes of the body and the senses. Therefore

they are established only by depending on means of knowledge such as perception. By "established" we have meant realization, the result of the means of knowledge. We have also said that this realization is changeless and self-established, and that its nature is the light of the self.

P 2.64 Here an objector says: That realization is the result of the means of knowledge, and that its nature is the changeless, eternal light of the self—these two claims contradict each other. To one who says this, the reply is: There is no contradiction. How then is realization a result? It is called a result figuratively. Though it is changeless and eternal, it is noticed at the end of cognitions such as perception, because these exist for its sake. Since cognitions such as perception are transient, it appears transient. Therefore it is figuratively called the result of the means of knowledge.

P 2.65 If this is so, venerable sir, then realization that is changeless and eternal is self-established, its nature being the light of the self, since in the self it depends on no means of knowledge. Everything else is unconscious and exists for the sake of another, because it acts only in combination. The non-self exists only in the form in which it serves another, as the realization of cognitions that cause pleasure, pain and delusion, and in no other form. Therefore, in the highest truth, it does not exist at all. In the world we see that the snake in the rope, the water in the mirage and the like do not exist apart from the realization of them. In the same way it is right that the duality of waking and dream also does not exist apart from the realization of it. In just this way, venerable sir, in the highest truth, realization, the light of the self, is uninterrupted, and so it is changeless, eternal and without a second, because it never varies in any of the different cognitions. The different cognitions, however, vary with respect to realization.[35] In dream, the cognitions that take various forms such as blue and yellow are said not to exist in the highest truth,

35 The rope and the snake are a stock image: a rope seen in dim light is taken for a snake, and the snake has no existence apart from that mistaken awareness. The mirage is a parallel example.

because they vary while that realization does not. The same is true in waking. The various cognitions of blue, yellow and the like vary with respect to that same realization, and so they must be unreal in form. There is no realizer of that realization other than itself, so it cannot take itself up or let itself go by its own nature, and there is nothing else that could do so.

P 2.66 It is just so. This is ignorance, the cause of the round of rebirth that consists in waking and dream. Knowledge is what removes that ignorance. In this way you reach fearlessness. From now on you will not experience the suffering of waking and dream. You are freed from the suffering of the round of rebirth.

P 2.67 "Om."[36]

CHAPTER 3: MEDITATION BY ENUMERATION

A meditation reflecting that sounds, touches and other objects cannot touch the self.

P 3.1 For those who seek liberation, who are intent on exhausting the merit and demerit they have already acquired and who wish to accumulate no new ones, this meditation of reckoning is taught. The faults that arise from ignorance give rise to activity of speech, mind and body. Through activity, actions accumulate whose fruits are desired, undesired or mixed. This meditation is taught for liberation from them.[37]

P 3.2 Now, the objects of the senses are sound, touch, form, taste and smell. They are grasped by the ear and the other senses, so they have no awareness either of themselves or of anything else. In this they are like clods of earth and the like, which are transformations of these same objects. They are known through the ear and the other senses, which serve as doors. That by which they are known is the knower, and so it is

36 Om is the sacred syllable, used here as an expression of assent.

37 The "meditation of reckoning" (*parisaṃkhyāna*, literally "reckoning up") is a reflection in which one distinguishes oneself, point by point, from the objects of the senses.

of a different kind from them. Sound and the rest combine with one another, and so they have many attributes. These include birth, growth, transformation, decline and destruction; conjunction and disjunction; appearance and disappearance; being a modification and being modified; and being field and seed. In general they also have many effects, such as pleasure and pain. Their knower, simply because it is their knower, is distinct from all the attributes of sound and the rest.

P 3.3 Then the one who knows, when afflicted by sound and the other objects as they are perceived, should reflect as follows:

P 3.4 Sound may come as mere sound in general, or with particular qualities such as the note *ṣaḍja*. It may come as words that are pleasant and welcome, such as praise, or as words that are unwelcome, such as falsehood, coarse talk, insult and abuse. In none of these forms can it make me its object and touch me. My nature is seeing; I am free of contact, free of change, unmoving, deathless and fearless, utterly subtle, and no object. It cannot touch me, simply because I am free of contact. For this very reason sound brings me neither loss nor gain. So what can sound do to me, whether it is praise or blame, pleasant or unpleasant? A pleasant sound might exalt a person who does not discriminate and has taken sound to be his self, and an unpleasant one might diminish him, because he does not discriminate. But to me, who discriminate, it cannot do even as much as the tip of a hair.[38] In the same way, touch can bring about no change in me, whether gain or loss, because I am without touch. This holds for touch in general and for its particular forms, such as cold and heat, softness and harshness. It holds for the pleasant and unpleasant ones, such as fever and stomach pain. It holds both for those that belong to the body and for those that arise from external, incidental causes. Touch can no more change me than blows of the fist can change the sky. Likewise form can bring me no loss or gain, because I am without form. This holds for form in general and for its particulars, pleasant and unpleasant, such as a woman's features. Likewise taste can bring no loss

38 *Ṣaḍja* is the first note of the Indian musical scale.

or gain to me, whose nature is without taste. This holds for taste in general and for its particulars, pleasant and unpleasant: sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter and astringent, which people of deluded intellect cling to. Likewise smell can bring no loss or gain to me, whose nature is without smell. This holds for smell in general and for its particulars, pleasant and unpleasant, such as the scent of flowers or of ointments. For scripture says: "That which is without sound, without touch, without form, imperishable, likewise without taste, eternal, and without smell."[39]

P 3.5 Moreover, it is the external objects themselves, sound and the rest, that are arranged in the form of the body. They are also arranged in the form of the ear and the other senses, which match them in measure and grasp them, and in the form of the two inner faculties and their objects. This is because they combine with one another and are joined together in every activity. This being so, for me, the one who knows, there is no enemy, no friend and no one indifferent. If anyone, from the conceit of false knowledge, should try to bring something pleasant or unpleasant upon me in the form of the fruit of an action, he tries in vain, because I am not his object. As tradition says: "This is unmanifest, this is unthinkable." Likewise none of the five elements can change me, because I am not their object. As tradition says: "This cannot be cut, this cannot be burned."[40] Those devoted to me, and those opposed to me, may wish to bring pleasant or unpleasant things upon me, taking note only of the arrangement of body and senses, and from this they may acquire merit and demerit and the like. All this belongs to them alone. It does not belong to me, who am ageless, deathless and fearless. For the scriptures say: "What he has done and what he has left undone do not torment him," "It does not grow greater by action, nor smaller," "For it is unborn, within and without," "Being outside it, it is not stained by the suffering of the world," and so on. The ultimate reason is that what is not the self does not exist. All the sentences of the Upanishads that teach that the

39 Katha Upanishad 3.15.
40 Bhagavad Gita 2.25 and 2.24.

self is without a second, since duality does not exist, should be examined in detail—should be examined.[41]

41 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.22 and 4.4.23; Mundaka Upanishad 2.1.2; Katha Upanishad 5.11.

Verse Part

पद्यप्रबन्धः *(Padyaprabandha)*

Nineteen chapters of verse on the self as pure seeing, the error of agency, the sentence "you are that," and the remedy for ignorance.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Homage to consciousness; knowledge, not ritual action, removes the ignorance at the root of rebirth.

V 1.1 To that consciousness which pervades all and is all, which dwells in the hidden depth of every being and lies beyond every object—to that all-knowing one, homage.

V 1.2 Having completed all the rites, beginning with taking a wife and establishing the sacred fires, the Veda now sets out to teach the knowledge of *brahman*.[1]

V 1.3 Actions bring about union with a body. Once there is union with a body, pleasant and unpleasant things are inevitable. From these come desire and aversion, and from these come actions.

V 1.4 From actions come merit and demerit for the ignorant person, and from these, once again, union with a body. In this way the round of rebirth rolls on without ceasing, with great force, like a wheel.

1 *brahman*, the absolute, the ground of all that is; not to be confused with Brahmā, the creator god.

V 1.5 Since ignorance is its root, the removal of ignorance is what is sought. That is why the knowledge of *brahman* has been taken up, for from it the highest good will follow.[2]

V 1.6 Only knowledge removes ignorance. Action does not, because it is not opposed to ignorance, and unless ignorance is removed, desire and aversion do not come to an end.

V 1.7 As long as desire and aversion have not ended, action arising from these faults is certain. Therefore knowledge alone is enjoined here for the sake of the highest good.

V 1.8 But surely the regular obligatory rites must still be performed as long as one lives, for they would then serve knowledge as an aid toward liberation.

V 1.9 Action is enjoined just as knowledge is, with no difference in that respect, and tradition speaks of the fault incurred by neglecting it. Therefore those who seek liberation must perform action.

V 1.10 "But knowledge, whose result is certain, depends on nothing else." Not so: the Agnishtoma, too, has a certain effect, and yet it depends on other things.[3]

V 1.11 In the same way knowledge, though its result is certain, depends on regular obligatory action. So some maintain. Not so, because action is opposed to knowledge.

V 1.12 Action is opposed to knowledge because it carries the sense of "I" and "mine," and here knowledge is declared to be the understanding that the self is free of change.[4]

V 1.13 Action sets in with the thought, "I am the doer; this will be mine." Knowledge depends on the thing as it is. An injunction depends on the doer.

2 Ignorance (*ajñāna*, *avidyā*) is not a lack of facts but the misidentification of the self with what it is not.

3 The Agniṣṭoma is a major Vedic soma sacrifice, performed by many priests together with numerous accessory rites.

4 *ātman*, one's own inmost being, the witness that is pure awareness.

V 1.14 Knowledge destroys the factors of action, just as it destroys the notion of water on a salt flat. Only someone who takes these factors to be real resolves to perform action.[5]

V 1.15 Because the two are contradictory, action cannot be performed together with knowledge. Therefore the knower who seeks liberation must give up action.

V 1.16 Living beings naturally take the embodied one to be no different from the body and the rest. This arises from ignorance, and as long as it lasts, the injunction to act applies.

V 1.17 When the body and the rest have been negated with "not this, not this," the self is left remaining, so that the self free of all distinctions may come to light. By this, ignorance is dispelled.[6]

V 1.18 Once ignorance has been removed by a means of knowledge, how could it arise again? It does not exist at all in the inner self, which is alone and free of distinctions.

V 1.19 And if it does not arise again, how could the thought "I am a doer, an enjoyer" occur once one knows "I am being"? Therefore knowledge needs no helper.

V 1.20 For this very reason scripture teaches the renunciation of actions, up to and including mental ones, saying that renunciation "surpassed" them. And in the text of the Vajasaneyins it says, "This much …"[7]

V 1.21 "… is immortality." Therefore those who seek liberation must give up action. To the claim that knowledge is like the Agnishtoma, the reply is as follows.

V 1.22 Action is accomplished by many factors, and its result is something other than itself. Knowledge is the opposite of this. Hence the analogy does not fit.

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5 The "factors of action" (*kāraka*) are the agent, instrument, object and the like that every action presupposes. On barren salt ground a mirage is mistaken for water.
6 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.3.6: the Upanishad's formula for *brahman,* which can be described only by negating every attribute.
7 Mahanarayana Upanishad 78–79 says that renunciation "surpassed" the lower austerities. The Vajasaneyins, followers of the White Yajurveda, transmit the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (4.5.15).

V 1.23 Since the Agnishtoma, like farming and similar work, aims at a result, it may require the support of other actions. But what else would knowledge require?

V 1.24 The fault of omission applies only to one in whom ego is assumed. Neither ego nor the desire for results exists in one who knows the self.[8]

V 1.25 Therefore this Upanishad has been begun to remove ignorance, to bring the round of rebirth to an end, and to set forth the knowledge of *brahman*.

V 1.26 The word *upaniṣad* comes from the root *sad* with the prefixes *upa* and *ni* and the suffix *kvip*. It is so called because it loosens, and also because it destroys, entry into the womb and the rest.[9]

CHAPTER 2: HOW KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF ARISES

The self is what remains after "not this, not this," grasped directly as "I am not this."

V 2.1 Because it cannot be negated, the self is what remains after "not this, not this." One grasps it directly in the thought, "I am not this, I am not this."

V 2.2 The notion "I" springs from a self taken as "this," and it falls within the range of what is "a matter of words." Because it springs from a self that has been negated, it can never again count as a means of knowledge.[10]

V 2.3 A later cognition does not arise without canceling the earlier one. But awareness that sees is one and self-established, and because it is the very result of knowing, it is never canceled.

8 *ahaṃkāra*, the ego, literally "the I-maker."

9 Shankara takes the root *sad* in its senses "to loosen" and "to destroy." *Kvip* is the grammarians' name for a suffix that leaves the bare root standing as a noun.

10 Chandogya Upanishad 6.1.4: every modification of clay is "a matter of words," a mere name; only the clay is real.

V 2.4 Passing beyond this forest, spoiled by grief, delusion and the rest, one arrives at one's own self, just as the man of Gandhara made his way out of the forest to his home.[11]

CHAPTER 3: THE LORD IS THE SELF

If the Lord is the self, knowing "I am the Lord" removes the notion that he is other.

V 3.1 If the Lord were other than the self, one should not hold the thought, "I am he." If he is the self, the knowledge "I am the Lord" removes the notion that he is other.

V 3.2 If attributes such as "not coarse" were held to belong to something other than the self, what use would they be, since that thing would be unknowable? But if they belong to the self, they remove the notion that it is something other.[12]

V 3.3 Hence "not coarse" and the rest should be understood as negating false superimposition. If they served to negate something in a being other than the self, they would amount to a description of emptiness.[13]

V 3.4 And if the negation were meant to apply to something other than the inner self of the one who seeks to know, then the words "without breath, without mind, pure" would be meaningless.[14]

11 Chandogya Upanishad 6.14: a man led blindfolded from Gandhara and abandoned in the wilderness finds his way home once someone tells him the way. The Upanishad uses this as its image of the teacher.
12 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.8.8 describes the imperishable as "not coarse, not fine, not short, not long."
13 Superimposition: taking one thing for another, as when mother-of-pearl is seen as silver or a rope as a snake.
14 Mundaka Upanishad 2.1.2.

CHAPTER 4: THE NATURE OF KNOWING THE TRUTH

Action springs from the notion "I"; once that seed is burned, it cannot sprout again.

V 4.1 Action has the notion "I" for its seed and abides in one who has that notion. Once it has been burned and that notion is gone, how could it sprout?

V 4.2 If you say it does sprout, as we see it do, then, since it is not held to come from anything else, how could it arise once its seed has been stopped? We ask you: tell us that.

V 4.3 Because action has the power to bring about a body and the rest, it may overpower the knowledge in you whose object is being and produce its result. When the action is spent, knowledge would emerge.

V 4.4 Both experience and knowledge are results of action that has already begun, so it is reasonable that they do not conflict. Action of the other kind, however, is different in nature.[15]

V 4.5 Whoever has knowledge in the self alone, a knowledge like the knowledge "the body is the self" but one that cancels it, is liberated even without wishing to be. Thus all this is established. We have set forth the argument.

CHAPTER 5: THE FAULT LIES IN THE INTELLECT

Abiding in the intellect, the self seems to move and think, as trees seem to move from a boat.

V 5.1 Just as Udanka, suspecting it was urine, would not take the nectar of immortality, so people do not accept knowledge of the self, for fear that their action will be destroyed.[16]

V 5.2 Abiding in the intellect, the self appears to move and appears to think, just as trees appear to move to someone in a boat. Such is the delusion of the round of rebirth.

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15 Action that has already begun to bear fruit (*prārabdha*) is held to sustain the body even of one who knows, until it is spent.

16 In a Mahabharata story the god Indra, in disguise, offered the sage Udanka the nectar of immortality as if it were urine, and Udanka refused it.

V 5.3 Just as, to someone in a boat, the trees seem to move in the opposite direction, so the self seems to pass from birth to birth. For scripture says, "it seems to think."[17]

V 5.4 The intellect's awareness, which shows forth sound and the other objects, arises pervaded by the reflection of consciousness, and this is what so deeply deludes the world.

V 5.5 The "I" is lit up by consciousness and exists for its sake. When the part that is "this" is removed, that experience is the supreme itself.

CHAPTER 6: SETTING ASIDE THE QUALIFICATIONS

Every qualifier of the self is like a severed hand; the knower is free of them all.

V 6.1 A hand cut off and thrown away no longer qualifies the self. The same holds for everything else that remains, whatever it may be that qualifies it.

V 6.2 Therefore every qualifier is just like the hand that was thrown away, because it is not the self. Therefore the knower is free of all qualifiers.

V 6.3 All these qualifiers are like a fine ornament put on by ignorance. Therefore, once the self is known, all of them become unreal.

V 6.4 The self is always to be grasped as the knower alone, setting aside what is known. Even what is grasped as "I" is like a limb that has been removed.

V 6.5 Whatever is the part that is "this," however large, is a qualifier distinct from oneself. Where all distinctions have vanished, the knower is established, as with Chitragu, "the man of the dappled cows."[18]

V 6.6 In the word "I," the wise should discard the part that is "this" as not the self. In "I am *brahman*," it is the remaining part

17 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.7.

18 *Citragu*, "one whose cows are dappled," is the grammarians' stock example of a compound that names something other than its parts: the owner, not the cows.

that is meant, the word being applied on the strength of its former use.[19]

CHAPTER 7: WHAT IS MOUNTED ON THE INTELLECT

Everything in every intellect is seen by me, so I am the all-knowing, supreme brahman.

V 7.1 Everything that has entered the intellect, wherever it may be, is always seen by me. Therefore I am the supreme *brahman*, all-knowing and all-pervading.

V 7.2 As I am the witness of the movements of my own intellect, so I am of others' as well. I can be neither removed nor taken up. Therefore I am the supreme.

V 7.3 The self is subject to neither change, impurity nor materiality, because it is the witness of every intellect, and its awareness is not limited as an intellect's is.

V 7.4 Just as, in sunlight, a gem shows forms such as red, so everything is seen in me, made visible by me as by sunlight.

V 7.5 What is seen exists in the intellect when the intellect exists, and not otherwise. Since the seer is always the seer, there is no duality.

V 7.6 Just as the intellect, failing to discriminate, takes the supreme to be nonexistent, so through discrimination it finds that nothing other than the supreme exists, not even itself.

CHAPTER 8: DISSOLVING THE MIND

The self tells the mind that its restless doings bring nothing to pure consciousness.

V 8.1 Mind, my own nature is simply consciousness. Your connection with tastes and the other objects is the work of delusion. So nothing at all comes to me from your doings, for I am free of every distinction.[20]

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19 "I am *brahman*": Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10. The grammatical principle of former use (*bhūtapūrvagati*) lets a word still apply to what it formerly denoted.
20 This chapter is addressed by the self to the mind, in the dialogue the author says he has devised (8.5).

V 8.2 Give up, here and now, your busyness with what is made of illusion, and come to rest for good from your false striving. For I am the supreme *brahman*, forever free, unborn, one, without duality.

V 8.3 I am always the same in all beings, alone, like space: all-pervading, imperishable, auspicious, without gaps, without parts, without action, supreme. Therefore nothing comes to me here from your efforts.

V 8.4 I am one. Nothing other than me is held to be mine, and I belong to no one, since I am unattached. My nature is free of attachment, so I have no use for anything you do, and since there is no duality, neither do you.

V 8.5 Seeing that people are bound up with results and with their causes, I have composed this dialogue for their release, to awaken them to the truth of their own nature.

V 8.6 Anyone who reflects on this dialogue is freed from the great terror that ignorance brings. Such a person, free of desire, goes about forever without sorrow, even-minded, knowing the self, and happy.

CHAPTER 9: SUBTLETY AND PERVASIVENESS

The elements grow subtler and more pervasive up to the inner self, one and without a second.

V 9.1 Subtlety and pervasiveness are to be understood as increasing step by step, from smell and the rest up to the inner self, where the series ends, as each earlier one is left behind.[21]

V 9.2 The earth in the body is as great in measure as the earth outside, and water and the other elements are likewise to be known as just as great in their entirety.

V 9.3 Just as space, before air and the rest arise, pervades everything, so I am one, always pure, consciousness alone, all-pervading, without a second.

21 "The inner self" renders *pratyagātman*.

V 9.4 Living beings, from Brahma down to things that do not move, are known as my dwelling. From what other source could faults such as desire and anger arise in me?[22]

V 9.5 People look on me as tainted, just as a child sees the sky as blue, though I am the Lord, present in all beings and never touched by their faults.

V 9.6 Since the thoughts of all living beings are always lit up by my consciousness, all living beings are the dwelling of me, the all-knowing one, free from evil.

V 9.7 Knowledge that comes to be, together with what it knows, is held to be like knowledge in a dream. Knowledge itself is eternal and has no object, and so duality does not exist.

V 9.8 For the knowing of the knower is declared eternal, since in deep sleep there is nothing else. But knowing in the waking state comes from ignorance, and what it grasps is to be regarded as unreal.

V 9.9 Seeing and the like cannot be objects, since they have no color or other such qualities. In the same way, it is understood that the plenitude cannot be an object of knowledge.[23]

CHAPTER 10: SEEING THE TRUE NATURE OF AWARENESS

The self is pure seeing, like the sky: unborn, one, untouched by waking, dream or sleep.

V 10.1 That which is awareness that sees, like the sky, the highest, shining once and for all, unborn, one, imperishable, untouched by any stain, all-pervading, without a second—that am I, ever free. Om.[24]

V 10.2 I am seeing itself, pure, by nature free of change, and by my very nature I have no object at all. In front, across, above,

22 Brahmā is the creator god, the first of embodied beings; the name is a different word from *brahman*, the absolute. "Dwelling" renders *pūḥ*, "city," the body as the stronghold the self inhabits.

23 "The plenitude" (*bhūman*) is the Chandogya Upanishad's name (7.23–24) for that which is infinite and has nothing beyond it.

24 Om is the sacred syllable of the Veda, uttered at the beginning and end of recitation.

below, on every side, I am the plenitude, wholly full, unborn, abiding in myself.

V 10.3 I am unborn and deathless, ageless and immortal, self-luminous, all-pervading, without a second. I am neither cause nor effect, utterly stainless, always content, and therefore free. Om.

V 10.4 No seeing of any kind belongs to me, whether in deep sleep, waking or dream; it is a delusion of the mind. Since these states have no reality, either of themselves or through anything else, I am always the Fourth alone, the seeing without a second.[25]

V 10.5 The stream of suffering made up of body, intellect and senses is not mine, nor is it I, for I am free of change. Since its cause is unreal, this stream is unreal too, like what a dreamer sees.

V 10.6 This is the truth: there is no change in me, and no cause of change, since I am without a second. I have neither merit nor sin, neither liberation nor bondage, nor do I belong to any class or stage of life, for I am bodiless.[26]

V 10.7 Since I am without beginning and without qualities, I have no action and no fruit of action; therefore I am the highest, without a second. Space is everywhere, yet nothing stains it. In the same way, nothing stains me, though I am present in the body, because I am subtle.

V 10.8 I am the Lord, always the same in all beings, beyond both the perishable and the imperishable, and so the highest of all. Though I am the reality of the supreme self, and without a second, ignorance covers me over by making things appear the wrong way round.

V 10.9 The self is set apart from ignorance, from mental impressions and from actions; nothing stands between it and anything, and it is utterly stainless. Filled with the powers of seeing and

25 The Fourth (*turīya*) is the self beyond the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, as taught in the Mandukya Upanishad.

26 Brahmanical society was ordered by four social classes (*varṇa*) and four stages of life (*āśrama*).

the rest, I, without a second, abide in my own nature, unmoving like the sky.

V 10.10 Scripture says: "One who sees the self with the firm conviction 'I am the supreme *brahman*' is not born again." Where there is no seed, no fruit is produced. So there is no birth, since there is no delusion.

V 10.11 People imagine: "This is mine," "it is like this," "this is of such a kind," "I am thus, not another, and not otherwise." Such imaginings are sheer delusion, and none of them exists in *brahman*, which is ever the same, without a second, and benign.

V 10.12 In great souls, whose knowledge is without a second and utterly stainless, there is no grief or delusion. Where these two are absent, there can be neither birth nor action. This is the settled conviction of those who know the Veda.

V 10.13 One who sees no duality while awake, as in deep sleep, or who sees it yet does not, since he is without a second, and who likewise is free of action though acting, knows the self, and no one else does. This is the settled conclusion here.

V 10.14 Thus I have set forth this vision of the supreme self, the highest, as the Vedanta has settled it. One who is firmly convinced of it is liberated, and here and now actions no more stain him than they stain space.[27]

CHAPTER 11: THE SEER

Being the seer is self-established; "not this, not this" leaves the knower free of action.

V 11.1 Being the seer is self-established for living beings; their being other than that comes from ignorance. Therefore the words "You are being" remove this otherness.[28]

27 Vedānta, "the end of the Veda," here means the Upanishads and the teaching drawn from them.

28 "You are being" paraphrases the Chandogya Upanishad's "you are that" (6.8.7), where "that" is being (*sat*), the existent from which the world arose.

V 11.2 Scripture says that immortality is not to be had that way, and that nothing else is an aid to knowledge. In saying so, it sets aside action together with its outward marks.

V 11.3 I see the workings of the minds of all without distinction. How, then, could there be any distinction in me, who am free of change?

V 11.4 For the seer, the workings of the mind in dream and waking lie in the mind alone. In the serenity of deep sleep there is no duality, and so the seer is consciousness alone, all-pervading, without a second.

V 11.5 A dream is real until one wakes. In the same way, in the waking state, identifying the self with the body and treating perception and the rest as means of knowledge hold good until the self is known.

V 11.6 Like space, I am present in all beings, yet free from their faults. I am the witness, the perceiver, without qualities, pure. I am *brahman* itself, that one alone.

V 11.7 Other than name, form and action, by nature ever free, I am the self, the supreme *brahman*; I am consciousness alone, always without a second.[29]

V 11.8 Some know, "I am *brahman*, and I am also an agent and an enjoyer." They are lost to both knowledge and action, and without doubt they would be unbelievers.[30]

V 11.9 The self's connection with the fruits of merit and demerit cannot be seen, yet it is accepted on the authority of scripture. Its being *brahman*, and liberation through knowledge, should be accepted on scripture in the same way.

V 11.10 The impressions that appear as saffron-colored and the like are experienced by those who dream. Seeing is other than these, alone by itself.[31]

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29 "Name and form" is the Upanishadic phrase for the whole manifest world of distinct things.

30 An unbeliever (*nāstika*) is one who denies the authority of the Veda.

31 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.3.6 describes the forms of the person as like a saffron-dyed cloth, like white wool and so on, just before the words "not this, not this."

V 11.11 In a dream one sees a sword drawn, as it were, from its sheath. In the same way, the knower, free of effect and cause, is self-luminous.

V 11.12 The words "not this, not this" teach the natural state of the knower, the man who wakes when he is rubbed with the hand. These words remove all that has been imagined onto it.[32]

V 11.13 In dream I imagine worlds within me, such as being a great king. In the same way, one should know that the two forms, together with their impressions, are imagined.[33]

V 11.14 Action is for the self that is identified with the body and the subtle body, which consists of impressions. Since my nature is "not this, not this," I never have any action to do.[34]

V 11.15 Therefore there is no hope of immortality from action, since action has ignorance for its cause. Liberation has knowledge for its cause, and so it depends on nothing else.

V 11.16 The self is immortal, free from fear and free from suffering; it is "not this, not this," and it is dear to me. Whatever is other than it is the opposite, so one should give it up, together with action.

CHAPTER 12: LIGHT

The mind takes the seer's reflection for the seer, like the man who forgets he is the tenth.

V 12.1 A person standing in the light takes his body to be luminous itself. In the same way, the mind, which holds the reflection of the seer, supposes, "I am the seer."

V 12.2 Whatever is seen in the world, the deluded person takes himself to be one with it, and because of this he does not find the self.

32 In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.1.15–20, King Ajatashatru wakes a sleeping man by rubbing him with his hand, to show where the self was during sleep.
33 The two forms of *brahman,* the formed and the formless, are described in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.3.1.
34 The subtle body (*liṅga*) is the inner apparatus that carries impressions from one life to the next.

V 12.3 The tenth man identifies himself with the nine. In just this way, and no other, these deluded people identify the self with the things they see.[35]

V 12.4 "Do this!" and "You are that" are two contradictory notions. Tell me, according to reason, how they could be present in the same place at the same time.

V 12.5 Suffering belongs to one who identifies himself with the body. It does not belong to one who is by nature bodiless, as in deep sleep. To remove it, "you are that" is said of seeing.

V 12.6 When the reflection of seeing has entered a notion, like the reflection of a face in a mirror, the yogi sees that notion and thinks, "The self has been seen."

V 12.7 If he knows that this notion, and the other, deluded one, are not seeing, then he alone is the best of yogis and no one else, without doubt.

V 12.8 What is called "you" is the knower of knowing. So that alone can be one's experience, and any experience other than that is false.

V 12.9 My nature is seeing, always eternal. How could there be seeing and not seeing in me? Therefore no other experience is admitted.

V 12.10 The heat of the sun in the body is an object for seeing. In the same way, whatever resides in the intellect is an object for seeing.[36]

V 12.11 Once every part that can be called "this" has been denied, the knower is like space, of one uniform essence, without a second, ever free and pure. I am that *brahman*, the alone.

V 12.12 There can be no other, higher knower of the knower. Therefore I am the knower, the highest, free, in all beings at all times.

V 12.13 One knows the self, and no one else does, if he knows that the self's seeing is never lost and that the self is not an

35 In the story of the tenth man, ten men ford a river. Each counts the others, finds only nine and forgets himself, until someone tells him, "You are the tenth."
36 "Intellect" here renders *sattva*, the inner organ, not the quality of goodness.

agent, and has also given up the idea of being a knower of *brahman*.

V 12.14 There is the discriminating notion, "I am only the knower, unknowable, pure, ever free." Even this notion belongs to the intellect, since it is something seen, and for that reason it perishes.

V 12.15 But the seeing of the self is never lost, since the factors of action cannot produce it. Its being produced is imagined because of another seeing, the one that is an object.

V 12.16 The self's agency depends on the idea that the body is the self, so it is false. The notion "I do nothing at all" is true, born of a valid means of knowledge.[37]

V 12.17 Agency depends on the factors of action, while non-agency is the self's own nature. It is firmly established that the awareness "I am an agent, an enjoyer" is simply false.

V 12.18 Once one's own nature has been understood in this way through scripture and inference, how could the notion "I am someone to be enjoined to act" be true?

V 12.19 Space is within everything, and I am within even space. I am free of change, unmoving, pure, ageless, free, always without a second.

CHAPTER 13: WITHOUT EYES

Without eyes, mind or breath, the self has neither knowledge nor ignorance, distraction nor concentration.

V 13.1 I have no eyes, and so I have no seeing. I have no ears, so what hearing could I have? I have no speech, so there can be no speaking. I have no mind, so how could there be thinking?

V 13.2 One without breath has no action, and where there is no intellect there is no knower. So neither knowledge nor ignorance belongs to me, whose light is consciousness alone.

V 13.3 I am ever free, pure, changeless, unmoving, immortal, imperishable, and so forever without a body.[38]

37 "I do nothing at all" echoes Bhagavad Gita 5.8.

38 "Changeless" renders *kūṭastha*, unchanging like an anvil.

V 13.4 Hunger and thirst, grief and delusion, old age and death do not exist for me, since I am bodiless and pervade all things like space.

V 13.5 Since I have no touch, there is no touching for me; since I have no tongue, there is no knowing of taste. My nature is eternal consciousness, so I never have either knowledge or ignorance.

V 13.6 But whatever activity of the mind arises through the eye and is colored by visible form is always seen by the eternal seeing of the self.

V 13.7 So too are the activities joined to the other senses and tinged by their objects, and memory, and states such as desire, which occur within the mind alone.

V 13.8 In the same way, the mind's activities in dream are seen by another. Therefore the seeing of the seer is eternal, pure, infinite and alone.

V 13.9 Here, for want of discrimination, it is taken to be impermanent and impure. And so, through the seen object, which acts as a limiting adjunct, one thinks "I am happy" or "I am unhappy,"[39]

V 13.10 or, through a dull object, "I am dull," and through a pure one, "I am pure." So this whole world thinks, and so it goes into the round of rebirth.

V 13.11 Anyone who seeks liberation should always remember the self here as scripture describes it: "without eyes" and the rest, "within and without, unborn," eternally free.[40]

V 13.12 And because scripture says "without eyes" and the rest, I never have senses. There is also the word of the Atharva Veda: "without breath, without mind, pure."[41]

39 A limiting adjunct (*upādhi*) lends its features to what lies near it, as a red flower makes clear crystal look red.

40 "Without eyes" is from Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.8.8. "Within and without, unborn" is from Mundaka Upanishad 2.1.2.

41 The Mundaka Upanishad (2.1.2), quoted here, belongs to the Atharva Veda.

V 13.13 And in the Katha the absence of sound and the rest is taught of me. Since I am without breath and without mind, I am always free of change.[42]

V 13.14 Therefore I have no distraction, and so no concentration either. Distraction or concentration can belong only to the mind, which changes.

V 13.15 How could this pair belong to me, who am without mind and pure? Freedom from mind and freedom from change belong to me, who am bodiless and all-pervading.

V 13.16 So, as long as there was this ignorance, there was something for me to do, though I am always eternally free, pure and awake.

V 13.17 How could there be concentration or its absence, or any other task? For by meditating on me and knowing me, people come to think they have done all there was to do.

V 13.18 I am *brahman*; I am all; therefore I am always pure and awake. I am unborn and everywhere, unaging, undecaying, immortal.

V 13.19 In all beings there is no knower other than me. I am the overseer of actions, the witness, the conscious one, eternal, without qualities, without a second.[43]

V 13.20 I am neither being nor non-being nor both; I am alone and auspicious. For me there is no twilight, no night, no day, since I am always the awareness that sees.[44]

V 13.21 Space is free of every form, subtle and without a second. I am without even that. I am *brahman* alone, and likewise without a second.

V 13.22 "My self," "his self," "your self": just as distinctions arise in the one space through its different hollows, so this distinction is imagined in me.[45]

42 Katha Upanishad 1.3.15.
43 Compare Shvetashvatara Upanishad 6.11.
44 Compare Shvetashvatara Upanishad 4.18.
45 The image of space enclosed in jars and other hollows: the space is one, the enclosures are many.

V 13.23 Difference and non-difference, one and many, are likewise imagined. How could the known and the knower, the going and the goer, exist in me, who am one?

V 13.24 There is nothing for me to give up and nothing for me to keep, because I am free of change: always free, always pure, always awake, without qualities, without a second.

V 13.25 So, with a collected mind, one should always know the self as all. Having known me as dwelling in one's own body, one becomes a sage, liberated and steadfast.

V 13.26 Whoever knows the truth in this way has done what was to be done. He is accomplished, a yogi, and a Brahmin indeed. Otherwise he would be a slayer of the self.

V 13.27 I have stated this settled meaning of the Veda in brief. One of disciplined understanding should teach it to renunciants who are at peace.

CHAPTER 14: DREAM AND MEMORY

The intellect takes the forms of objects; one who knows the self has nothing left to do.

V 14.1 In dream and in memory, a semblance of the form of a jar or the like appears. From this it is inferred that the intellect must earlier have been seen in that form.

V 14.2 The body seen in a dream wandering for alms is not oneself. In the same way, because one is its seer, one is other than the body seen in waking.

V 14.3 Just as copper poured into a mold takes on its shape, so the mind, pervading visible forms and the rest, surely appears in their likeness.

V 14.4 Or, just as light, which reveals, takes on the form of what it reveals, so the intellect, because it reveals all things, appears in the form of its objects.

V 14.5 For what the person has seen before as well is the intellect itself in the form of the object. If not, how could one see in dream? And where would the form come from for one who remembers?

V 14.6 Its being a revealer is just this: its being seen in the form of visible form and the rest. Likewise, the seeing awareness is a seer in that it pervades the intellect as it arises.

V 14.7 All the intellects in all bodies are lit by me, whose light is pure consciousness. Therefore I am the self of all.

V 14.8 In dream, the instrument, the object, the agent, the action and the result are all the intellect. Since it is seen to be so in waking too, the seer is other than it.

V 14.9 The intellect and the rest are not the self, since they are things to be rejected or accepted. The self, which does the rejecting and accepting, can be neither given up nor taken hold of.

V 14.10 In what is pure, within and without, solid, whose one essence is consciousness, how could anything else, outer or inner, be thought of as something to reject?

V 14.11 The self is what remains when everything else is excluded by "not this, not this." If the knower of *brahman* accepts that as the self, how could he still strive after anything further?

V 14.12 One should reflect plainly in this way: "I am *brahman* alone, beyond hunger and the rest, without any break. How could I have anything to do?"

V 14.13 If one who knows the self still wants to do some other task here, he is like a man who has reached the far bank of a river and, standing there, wants to cross to the far bank.

V 14.14 If someone who knows the self still has things to reject and accept, he should be known as unfit for liberation. *Brahman* has surely spat him out.

V 14.15 Breath is the world, together with the sun. Therefore even for one who knows breath there is neither day nor night. How much less for the knower of *brahman*, in what is without a second?[46]

V 14.16 The self does not remember itself, nor could it forget itself, since its consciousness is never lost. And the knowledge

46 Breath (*prāṇa*) is the life-force, which the Upanishads identify with the whole world (compare Chandogya Upanishad 3.11).

that "the mind, too, remembers" is born of ignorance as its cause.

V 14.17 A self that is known, distinct from the knower, is held to be imagined by ignorance. When knowledge removes it, like the snake on the rope, there is no second.[47]

V 14.18 Since there is no agent, no action and no fruit, the self is within and without, unborn. In it, whose could the notion "mine" or "I" be, and where could it come from?

V 14.19 The notion of "self" and "belonging to the self" is created by ignorance. When the self is one, it does not exist. Where there is no seed, how can there be fruit?

V 14.20 That imperishable is the seer, the hearer, the thinker, the knower; there is no other seer than it. Therefore, since I am the seer, I am the imperishable.[48]

V 14.21 Therefore all that is unmoving and moving, joined to the activity of seeing and the rest, is the imperishable alone; and I am the imperishable, the self of all.

V 14.22 Whoever sees the self as having nothing left to do, free of action and of action's fruit, without "mine," without ego—he sees.[49]

V 14.23 If you know that "mine," ego, effort and desire are by their very nature empty in the self, then rest, established in yourselves. What use is striving?

V 14.24 One who knows the self as the maker of the notion "I," and also as the knower, does not know the self. One who knows it otherwise is the knower of the self.

V 14.25 Just as the self is thought to be one with the body and the rest though it is other than them, so, through lack of knowledge, the self, which does not act, is taken to be one with action and its fruit.

47 The rope and the snake: in dim light a rope is taken for a snake, and the snake vanishes when the rope is seen for what it is.

48 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.8.11.

49 The closing words echo Bhagavad Gita 13.27.

V 14.26 People always find seeing, hearing, thinking and knowing in dream. Since these are the very nature of the self, the self is directly evident.

V 14.27 For the knower of the self who has no fear of the next world and no fear of death, even the mighty lords, Brahma and Indra among them, would be objects of pity.[50]

V 14.28 What would lordship mean to him, or the rank of Brahma or Indra, if his craving, the evil from which all wretchedness springs, has been cut off on every side?

V 14.29 When the notion of the self as "I" and the notion of what belongs to the self as "mine" have become empty of any object, then one is a knower of the self.

V 14.30 If someone knows that the self is without distinguishing features even while limiting adjuncts such as the intellect are present, how could he have anything to do?

V 14.31 Say, then: for one in whom the knowledge of the self has arisen, the self that is clear and stainless space, whose one essence is consciousness, without a second, what other task could be required?

V 14.32 One who sees the self as dwelling in all beings and yet sees someone as his enemy surely wants to make fire cold.

V 14.33 The self copies the intellect and the breath, and, like a reflection, comes within the range of the eye and the other senses; so scripture says, "it seems to think." Yet in itself it is pure and free.[51]

V 14.34 How could I have anything to do, I, the awareness that sees, without breath and without mind, unattached, pervading all like space?

V 14.35 I see no lack of concentration in me, who am always free of change. For me, *brahman*, wholly pure and free from evil, there is nothing else to be purified.

V 14.36 Likewise there is nowhere for me to go, since I am everywhere and unmoving. There is no up, no down, no across, since I am without parts and without qualities.

50 Indra is the king of the gods.
51 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.7.

V 14.37 I am ever the light of pure consciousness, and in it there is no darkness. How then could anything still remain for me to do now, when I am eternally free?

V 14.38 What thought can there be for one without mind, or what action for one without senses? The word of scripture is true: "without breath, without mind, pure."

V 14.39 Because the self is beyond time and place, all-pervading and without cause, one who always meditates on it has no need of time, place or the like.

V 14.40 That in which the gods, the Vedas and everything that purifies become one is the sacred bathing-place of the mind; whoever bathes there becomes immortal.[52]

V 14.41 There is no sound or other object that is known by itself alone, nor are they seen by one another. Just as tastes and the rest are seen by something other, so too what belongs to the body is seen by another, simply because it is seen.

V 14.42 In the same way the notions "I" and "mine," desire, effort, change, pleasure and the rest are seen here by another, because they are seen. Since they all share in being objects, they cannot be objects for one another; therefore there must be something beyond them.

V 14.43 For every change, beginning with the activity of the ego, is bound up, together with its own agent, with the fruit of action. It is therefore lit up on every side, as if by the sun, by the unattached self, whose very form is consciousness.

V 14.44 As the awareness that sees, it pervades the minds of all embodied beings, as space does. Therefore there is no knower besides it, and none higher than it; it is the one Lord.

V 14.45 And if body and intellect are seen by something other than themselves, then I have thoroughly refuted the doctrines that deny a self. The supreme is pure, because impurity can

52 A *tīrtha* is a ford or sacred bathing-place on a river, where pilgrims bathe to be purified.

never make it its object. It is wholly stainless, all-pervading, unattached, without a second.[53]

V 14.46 If you do not accept that the mind, active in many ways through its own modifications, takes on the form of a jar and the like, then there is no warding off the faults that belong to the intellect: impurity, non-consciousness, form and change.

V 14.47 Just as pure space, unbroken, neither clings to anything nor is stained by it, so this true self, always the same in all beings, neither clings nor is stained. It is ageless, deathless and free of fear.

V 14.48 People of confused vision, through ignorance, project the unformed and the formed, and the latent impressions of action, onto the self, as though they lay outside that whose nature is seeing. When these are set aside with the words "not this," seeing alone remains.[54]

V 14.49 The form the mind takes in waking, produced by its contact with objects, is seen as if it were an object, both in memory and by one who is asleep. In the same way, because the body too appears as such an image, body and mind are distinct from seeing, since they are seen.

V 14.50 When clouds and other stains have passed from the sky, which is pure by its very nature, it is without distinctions. In the same way seeing, which is like the sky and in which scripture has ruled out all duality, is always without distinctions.

CHAPTER 15: ONE THING DOES NOT BECOME ANOTHER

One thing cannot become another; the self is the light that reveals all states of mind.

V 15.1 Since one thing cannot become another, one should not meditate on anything else; for if one thing were to become the self of another, its destruction would be certain.

53 The doctrines that there is no self (*nirātmavāda*) are chiefly those of the Buddhists.

54 "Not this" echoes "not this, not this" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.3.6), where the formed and the unformed are also named.

V 15.2 When someone remembers, what was once seen is seen again, like a picture painted on canvas. That in which it is seen and that by which it is seen are to be known as the two called the intellect and the knower of the field.[55]

V 15.3 What was experienced, ending in its result and joined with the agent and the other factors of action, stands as an object when it is remembered. It is simply the earlier action, stored up.

V 15.4 What is seen must always be other than the seer, because it is seen, like a jar. The seer is not of the same kind as the seen, as the intellect is; otherwise it could not be the witness.

V 15.5 Caste and the like, which in themselves are like a corpse, can prompt one to carry out the injunctions only through the notion that they are one's own self. Otherwise they would have to be, like that self, of the nature of knowledge.

V 15.6 Because scripture says "neither pleasant nor unpleasant," bodilessness is not the fruit of action. Connection with a body is the cause of action; therefore the wise should give up actions.[56]

V 15.7 If you say the self is free to act, then grant that it is equally free to cease from action. Once it is known that bodilessness is a result that cannot be produced, how could one go on performing actions?

V 15.8 Setting aside caste and the like, which are the occasions for actions, the wise should keep in mind, as scripture teaches it, their own nature, which runs counter to the causes of action.

V 15.9 The self is one in all beings, and they are in it, as things are in space. It "has encompassed" everything, like space, and is held to be "bright," full of light.[57]

V 15.10 Through the words "without wound" and "without sinews" one should rule out the gross body. Through "pure" and

55 *Sattva* here means the intellect. The *kṣetrajña*, "knower of the field," is the Bhagavad Gita's name for the conscious self that knows the body (13.1–2).

56 Chandogya Upanishad 8.12.1: "pleasant and unpleasant do not touch one who is without a body."

57 Isha Upanishad 8: "He has encompassed all—bright, bodiless, without wound, without sinews, pure, untouched by evil."

"untouched by evil" one should rule out any stain, and through "bodiless," the subtle body as well.

V 15.11 Vasudeva spoke of himself as the same in the sacred fig tree and in his own body. Whoever knows the self in that way, as the same everywhere, is the foremost of those who know *brahman*.[58]

V 15.12 Just as no one takes other people's bodies as "I" or "mine," it should be the same with this body, since being the witness of the intellect is no different here.

V 15.13 Attraction, aversion and fear have the same seat as the impressions of visible form. Because they are perceived, they rest in the intellect; therefore the knower is always pure and free of fear.

V 15.14 "One becomes whatever one's mind is set on." This holds when the object is something other. It does not hold for the self, which is free of action, because it is one's own self. As one's own self it depends on nothing, for what depends on something else is not oneself.

V 15.15 Knowing, like space, is of a single nature: undivided, ageless and stainless. Through limiting adjuncts such as the eye, it is imagined to be the opposite.

V 15.16 This "I," because it is seen, is not a property of the self, any more than a jar is. The other notions and the faults are to be understood in the same way; therefore the self is stainless.

V 15.17 Because it is the witness of all notions, the self is free of change and all-pervading. If the seer changed, it would know only a little, like the intellect and the rest.

V 15.18 The seer's seeing is never lost, as the seeing of the eye and the other senses is. Scripture says, "there is no loss of the seeing of the seer." Therefore the seer is always seeing.[59]

V 15.19 One should inquire: "Am I the combination of the elements, and likewise of the sense faculties? Or am I one of them taken singly? Who am I?"

58 Vasudeva is Krishna, who in the Bhagavad Gita (10.26) names himself the sacred fig (*aśvattha*) among trees.
59 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.23.

V 15.20 I am not an element or a sense faculty, whether singly or together, since they are known, like a jar, and since they are instruments. The knower is other than they are.

V 15.21 The intellect is the fuel of the fire that is the self. Kindled by ignorance, desire and action, it blazes always through the doors of hearing and the other senses.

V 15.22 When the intellect is active in the senses, chief among them the right eye, the fire of the self, kindled by objects as its oblation, is then the enjoyer of the gross.[60]

V 15.23 One who, in perceiving form and the like, remembers, "Oblations are being offered into the fire of the self," and is free of attraction and aversion, is not stained by faults in the waking state.

V 15.24 When it sees, in the house of the mind, the latent impressions of ignorance and action made manifest and lit up by its own light, the self is called "the luminous one."[61]

V 15.25 When neither objects nor impressions are stirred up in the intellect by actions, then the self is to be known as "the knowing one," seeing nothing other than itself.[62]

V 15.26 The states of mind, intellect and senses, set in motion by action, are lit up by consciousness alone, as jars and the like are lit up by the sun.

V 15.27 This being so, the knower, which lights up the intellect's cognitions with its own light, is called their agent only by the deluded, because the cognitions exist for its sake.

V 15.28 For this very reason it would also be all-knowing, since it lights up everything with its own light. In the same way the self is the doer of all, because it is the cause of all actions.

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60 The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (4.2.2) places the waking self in the right eye, and the Mandukya (3) calls the waking self the "enjoyer of the gross." This and the next verses describe waking, dream and deep sleep.

61 *Taijasa*, "the luminous one," is the Mandukya Upanishad's name for the self in dream. The Brihadaranyaka (4.3.9) says that in dream the person is his own light.

62 *Prājña*, "the knowing one," is the Mandukya Upanishad's name for the self in deep sleep.

V 15.29 Thus the self has been described with its limiting adjuncts. Without adjuncts it is indescribable: without parts, without qualities, pure. Mind and speech do not reach it.

V 15.30 Whether it is conscious or unconscious, agent or non-agent, moving or unmoving, bound or free, one or many, pure or otherwise—

V 15.31 —words turn back without reaching it, and thoughts with them, because it has no qualities, no action and no distinguishing features.[63]

V 15.32 Space pervades everything, yet it is free of every form. In the same way one should know the self here as the pure and highest state.

V 15.33 Leaving behind, in it, what is seen and what is remembered, the one who pervades all should cast off darkness as well. Joined with the light of all-seeing awareness, one does this as the sun casts off the darkness of night.

V 15.34 The one whose field is the notions whose objects are form, memory and darkness is the self alone. It is the same seer in all beings, all-pervading.

V 15.35 From the meeting of self, intellect, mind, eye, object and light, a varied notion arises in the intellect, a notion marked by ignorance.

V 15.36 Distinguishing one's own self from this, one should know it as the pure and highest state: the seer present in all beings, the same in all, beyond every fear.

V 15.37 It is whole, all-pervading, at peace and stainless, abiding like space. It is without parts and without action, it is everything, eternal, free of the pairs of opposites.

V 15.38 One should reflect, "How can the knower, the witness of all notions, be known by me?" Only after such reflection should one decide whether *brahman* is known or not.

V 15.39 Scripture teaches in such words as "unseen, the seer" and "if you think you know it well, you know but little." There-

63 Echoes Taittiriya Upanishad 2.4.1: "from which words turn back, together with the mind, without reaching it."

fore the supreme *brahman* cannot in any way be known, whether by me or by others.[64]

V 15.40 Yet *brahman* is always known by me, because it is my own nature and nothing stands between us. Its very nature is the light of knowledge, and it needs no other knowledge.

V 15.41 The sun needs no other light to reveal itself. In the same way awareness, being awareness by its own nature, requires no other awareness in order to reveal itself.

V 15.42 Whatever is a thing's own nature, it depends on nothing else for that. There is no light that has to be seen by another light.

V 15.43 What is not luminous becomes manifest through contact with what is luminous by nature. Hence it is false to say that light is something the sun produces.

V 15.44 What comes to be from something, having not been before, is held to be that thing's effect. Light is the sun's own nature, so it does not arise from the sun after not having been.

V 15.45 The sun and the like are held to be the makers of light merely by existing, since jars and other things become manifest through them. Accept the same for the self that is awareness.

V 15.46 When a snake comes out of its hole, the sun lights it up without any effort. In the same way the self is the knower without effort, because its nature is awareness.

V 15.47 In the same way, what is hot burns simply by existing; accept the same of the self that is awareness. Only when a limiting adjunct is present and known, as when the snake has come out—

V 15.48 —is the knower, though it makes no effort to know, likewise an agent, like a lodestone. In its own nature, then, the self is neither knowable nor unknowable.[65]

64 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.7.23; Kena Upanishad 2.1.

65 A lodestone (*bhrāmaka*), a natural magnet, sets iron in motion without itself moving.

V 15.49 This follows from the teaching that "it is other than the known, and other than the unknown." Bondage, liberation and the other states are likewise imagined in the self.[66]

V 15.50 Day and night do not exist in the sun, because its nature as light is without distinctions. In the same way knowing and not knowing do not exist in the self, because its nature as awareness is without distinctions.

V 15.51 Whoever knows *brahman* by the method set out here, as it has been described, beyond anything to be given up or taken up, is truly never born again.

V 15.52 Whoever has fallen into the streams of birth and death can never rise out of them by any means other than knowledge.

V 15.53 For scripture says: "The knot of the heart is cut, all doubts are severed, and his actions are exhausted when he is seen."[67]

V 15.54 If a person casts off "I" and "mine" on every side and is firmly settled in this state, which is free of the body, like the sky, and taught here on the basis of well-examined scripture and inference, he is liberated.

CHAPTER 16: MADE OF EARTH

The body and senses are made of elements; rival accounts of bondage and liberation are refuted.

V 16.1 In the body, the hard element is held to be of earth and the fluid element of water. Digestion, movement and open space come from fire, wind and ether.

V 16.2 The organs of smell and the rest, and their objects, are qualities of earth and the other elements, in that order. Each sense is held to have an object of its own kind, as light has visible form.

V 16.3 These, they say, serve knowing, while speech, the hands and the rest serve action. For construing what they bring there is the mind, the eleventh, which is internal.

66 Kena Upanishad 1.4.
67 Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.8.

V 16.4 The intellect serves determination, and it brings all objects to experience. The self is called the knower, because it always makes the intellect manifest by the light that is its own nature.

V 16.5 Light, which reveals, takes on the form of what it reveals, and though it mingles with it, it does not mix with it. The knower always stands in the same way toward notions.

V 16.6 A lamp that stands still lights up, without effort, whatever comes within its reach. In the same way the knower sees the intellect's cognitions, which take the form of sound and the rest, as they come before it.

V 16.7 In the aggregate of body and senses, pleasure and the rest reach the intellect, which is taken to be the self. Lit by the light of the eternal self, they give it its particular character.

V 16.8 Because of a headache or the like, one sees oneself as "I am in pain." But the seer is other than the one in pain, since the one in pain is seen. Because he is the seer, he is not in pain.

V 16.9 One might be in pain through the conceit "I am in pain," but not through seeing the one in pain. The one in pain is what is compounded of limbs and the like. The seer of the pain is not the one in pain.

V 16.10 If you say that the self, like the eye, can be both object and agent: no, for the eye is manifold and compounded. Therefore the self, being the seer, cannot become an object.

V 16.11 If the self too is held to be manifold, having knowledge, effort and the like: no. Since knowledge is its one quality, it can no more be its own object than light can.

V 16.12 Light illuminates, yet it does not illuminate itself. In the same way, even if a division within it were granted, the knower does not see itself, because the parts would be alike.

V 16.13 A thing does not become the object of the very property it possesses. Fire does not burn itself, and in the same way it does not illuminate itself.

V 16.14 This same argument refutes the view that the intellect grasps itself by itself. Nor can one part grasp another, since the parts would be alike and it has no internal division.

V 16.15 In the same way, emptiness is not tenable either. It is therefore reasonable that the intellect, like a jar, is seen by something other than itself, and that something is established before conceptual construction.[68]

V 16.16 That which comes before conceptual construction surely exists, and it is free of construction. But whatever gives rise to construction is, for that reason, the cause of duality alone.

V 16.17 Ignorance is the root of construction and governs the round of rebirth. Having cast it off, one should know the self as the supreme *brahman*, liberated and forever without fear.

V 16.18 There are waking and dream, and their seed, called deep sleep, which is made of darkness. Since each is absent in the others, one should give up all three as nonexistent.

V 16.19 Self, intellect, mind, eye, light, object and the rest become mixed together, and because their activities occur at the same time, the error arises that action belongs to the self.

V 16.20 Closing and opening belong to the seat of the eye, which is of the nature of air, and not to the eye, because the eye illuminates. Likewise these activities are not in the mind or the intellect, since they too illuminate.

V 16.21 Volition belongs to the mind and determination to the intellect. Neither has the property of the other, and all of it is imagined in the self.

V 16.22 The senses see only within their own locations. The intellect takes on their nature, and the knower, who sees the intellect, appears as if confined to the body.

V 16.23 The intellect is utterly momentary, nothing but factors in a ceaseless stream. It seems one through the likeness of its moments, like a lamp flame, and its extinction is the human goal.[69]

V 16.24 Some hold that visible form and the rest exist and are made manifest by something other than their own form. Others

68 Emptiness (*śūnyatā*) is the teaching of the Madhyamaka school of Buddhism that nothing has a fixed nature of its own.

69 Verses 23–30 examine a Buddhist view. On that view the mind is a stream of momentary factors (*dharmas*), and their extinction is liberation.

hold that nothing exists apart from the intellect. For both, an inconsistency with the position stated before is pointed out.[70]

V 16.25 If cognition takes the form of an external object, there could never be memory, because cognition lasts only a moment. Being momentary, the intellect could never lay down an impression anywhere.

V 16.26 Since there is no substratum either, everything would be alike, for want of a cause. And if the intellect persisted, momentariness would be lost, which they do not accept.

V 16.27 Since extinction comes about without effort, teaching a means to it is pointless. Since extinction is complete in each single moment, it depends on nothing else.

V 16.28 If dependence is accepted, let it be on a different stream as well, someone else's. But in which momentary thing could every purpose be served? Even so, there would be no dependence on anything else.

V 16.29 Two things that arise at the same moment would be joined to each other, and the one shaped by that joining could look to the other.

V 16.30 For us, a false superimposition is destroyed where it occurs. But tell me: if liberation is the destruction of everything, whose fruit is it?

V 16.31 To begin with, there is something that exists of itself, whether you call it knowledge, the self, or something else. Since it knows both existence and nonexistence, its own nonexistence is never known.

V 16.32 That by which nonexistence is known must exist. If it did not, the world would know neither existence nor nonexistence, and no one accepts that.

V 16.33 What is held to come before the construction "existent, nonexistent, both existent and nonexistent" is nondual, because it is everywhere the same. It is eternal, because it is other than what is constructed.

V 16.34 Duality should be held to be unreal, like what is seen in a dream, because it arises from construction. It is also unreal

because it did not exist before existence, nonexistence and the rest were constructed.

V 16.35 Modifications are nonexistent according to the scripture that calls them "a matter of words," according to "he goes from death to death" and similar passages, and according to the tradition that says "my illusion."[71]

V 16.36 For this very reason the self is pure, and it is different from construction. Since it is not constructed, the self is neither to be taken up nor to be given up by anyone else.

V 16.37 There is no absence of light in the sun, whose nature is light. In the same way there is no ignorance in the self, whose nature is eternal awareness.

V 16.38 Likewise, because its nature is free of change, the self has no other state. If it had another state, it would undoubtedly perish.

V 16.39 For anyone who takes liberation to be a different state, liberation is something made and therefore transient. Liberation cannot properly be either a union or a separation in any way.

V 16.40 Union is impermanent, and so is separation, and so are going and coming. But one's own nature is never lost.

V 16.41 One's own nature has no cause, while the other things have causes. One's own nature is not acquired, and in the same way it is not given up by oneself.

V 16.42 Because it is the very nature of everything, it cannot be given up, since it is not other, nor can it be taken hold of. It is therefore eternal, because it is not an object and stands apart.

V 16.43 Since everything exists for the sake of the self, the self alone is eternal and absolute. Therefore one who knows liberation should give up all actions together with their means.

70 The two views are those of Buddhists who accept external objects and of Buddhists who hold that only consciousness exists.

71 Chandogya Upanishad 6.1.4; Katha Upanishad 4.10; Bhagavad Gita 7.14.

V 16.44 "Gaining the self is the highest gain": so scripture and reasoning declare. Gaining what is not the self is no gain, so one should give up identification with what is not the self.[72]

V 16.45 The disturbance of the equilibrium of the *guṇas* cannot be accounted for, because ignorance and the rest lie dormant, and no other cause is accepted.[73]

V 16.46 If they cause one another, activity would either go on always or never begin. There could be no regularity of activity, whether its cause lies in the *guṇas* or in the self.

V 16.47 If one exists for the sake of the other, no distinction between the liberated and the bound can be maintained. There is a relation between an aim and one who seeks it, but the knower seeks nothing, and neither does the other.

V 16.48 Even within Sāṃkhya teaching, primal matter cannot exist for the sake of another, since *puruṣa* is free of change. And if *puruṣa* changed, it would not hold either.

V 16.49 Since no relation between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* is possible, it is untenable for primal matter, being unconscious, to exist for the other's sake.

V 16.50 If liberation is produced by action, it is perishable. If it comes from knowledge alone, the earlier objection applies. If it has no cause, it follows that primal matter could never be released.

V 16.51 Heat is not illuminated by the light of the fire it shares. In the same way, for the followers of Kanada and others, pleasure and the rest could not be grasped by knowledge, since they share the same seat.[74]

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72 Compare Apastamba Dharmasutra 1.8.22.2: "there is nothing higher than gaining the self."

73 Sāṃkhya, a dualist school, holds that spirit (*puruṣa*) and primal matter (*prakṛti*, also *pradhāna*) are distinct. It teaches that matter's three *guṇas*, *sattva* (goodness/clarity), *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (darkness/inertia), rest in equilibrium until creation begins.

74 Vaiśeṣika, the school traced to Kaṇāda, holds that pleasure, pain, knowledge and the like are qualities that inhere in the self and arise through its contact with the mind.

V 16.52 Pleasure and cognition would also inhere in the self at the same time, since contact with the mind is their single cause. Pleasure would then be impossible to perceive.

V 16.53 Likewise, since the other qualities differ, they are not held to arise at the same time. If you say that knowledge is simply the qualities' inhering in the self: no, because of how it is qualified.

V 16.54 Pleasure is qualified by knowledge alone, so it is reached by knowledge, and the memory "I knew pleasure" shows the same. But on your view the self is not knowledge by nature.

V 16.55 On your view pleasure and the rest are not properties of the self, since the self is free of change. Since they are distinct from it, why should they not belong to something else, or to the mind, since there is no difference?

V 16.56 If knowledge became an object of knowledge, an endless chain would be unavoidable. Otherwise you would have to grant that cognitions arise simultaneously, and then let that be accepted.

V 16.57 Since the self has no other state, bondage cannot be ascribed to it. Nor can impurity, since it is unattached, as scripture says: "for he is unattached."[75]

V 16.58 Being subtle, one and beyond the senses, it "is not tainted," as scripture says. If so, then since there is no bondage, there is no liberation at all.[76]

V 16.59 Then scripture would be pointless. No: bondage is held to be an error of the intellect, and liberation its destruction, just as stated and not otherwise.

V 16.60 Lit by the light of the self, which is awareness, the intellect thinks that awareness is in itself and that there is no knower other than itself. This error lies in the intellect.

V 16.61 Since awareness is the self's own nature, it is always ascribed to the intellect in a figurative sense. This failure to discriminate has no beginning, and it is the round of rebirth, nothing else.

75 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.15.
76 Compare Katha Upanishad 5.11 and Bhagavad Gita 13.32.

V 16.62 Liberation can only be its destruction. There is no other liberation, because no other is tenable. Those for whom liberation means turning into a different thing in effect hold it to be destruction.

V 16.63 In the same way, a different state is untenable, since the self is free of change. If it changed, it would be made of parts, and then it would perish, like a jar.

V 16.64 Therefore every other notion of bondage, liberation and the like is an error. This includes the notions of Sāṃkhya, of Kanada's school, of the Buddhists, of Mīmāṃsā and of the Jains.[77]

V 16.65 Since they conflict with scripture and reasoning, they should never be given credence. Their faults could be told by the hundreds and the thousands.

V 16.66 Censure of them is justified, and tradition speaks of "those that are other than this." For these reasons the wise should set aside what other systems teach and make their understanding firm.[78]

V 16.67 Putting faith and devotion first and abandoning all crookedness, they should make it firm in the true meaning of Vedanta alone, and in what Vyasa holds.[79]

V 16.68 So the constructions of those who teach duality, and the doctrines that deny a self, have been refuted by reasoning. Those who seek liberation may now stand firm on the path of knowledge, free of the doubts that others' doctrines raise.

V 16.69 If one rightly attains the knowledge that is its own witness, utterly pure, the opposite of all conceptual constructions, and nondual, and is firmly convinced of it, then, free of every connection, one reaches everlasting peace.

V 16.70 This is the highest secret, the final refuge. Those who are free of faults and without pride should examine it and keep

77 Mīmāṃsā is the school of Vedic exegesis centered on ritual action. The Jains (*ārhata*, followers of the *arhats*) are a renunciant tradition that holds the soul is freed by shedding the matter of *karma*.

78 Manu 12.96 says that teachings other than the Veda arise and pass away and are fruitless.

their minds always set on honesty, for no one who sees the truth has a mind inclined to deceit.

V 16.71 Knowing this, which is supreme and purifying, a person is freed from the sins piled up over many births, sins caused by ignorance, and like the sky he is not stained by actions.

V 16.72 This should be imparted constantly to one who seeks liberation: one whose mind is calm, who has mastered the senses, who is rid of faults, who does as he is taught, who has good qualities and who always follows the teacher.

V 16.73 Just as one does not take another person's body to be oneself, so too, having seen the highest truth, one does not take one's own body to be oneself. Having attained this utterly pure awareness, one is then free in every respect.

V 16.74 There is no gain here greater than the gain of one's own nature, and it comes from this and from nothing else. This gain of one's own nature, which surpasses even the kingship of Indra, must not be given without careful examination.

CHAPTER 17: RIGHT UNDERSTANDING

Knowledge of brahman comes from the Veda alone; the self is like a conjurer untouched by illusion.

V 17.1 The self is what is to be known, the highest self, apart from which nothing exists. Homage to that self which is to be known, all-knowing, all-seeing and pure.

V 17.2 I bow forever to those who, like lamps, versed in words, sentences and the means of knowledge, have brought to light *brahman*, the secret of the Veda.[80]

V 17.3 The sunbeams of their words fell on me and destroyed the darkness and stain within me. Bowing to those teachers, I will set out the settled truth of the knowledge of *brahman*.

79 Vyasa, the legendary compiler of the Vedas and the Mahabharata, is identified in the tradition with the author of the Brahmasutra.

80 Words, sentences and means of knowledge stand for the traditional disciplines of grammar, Vedic exegesis and logic.

V 17.4 There is no gain higher than the gain of the self. The statements of the Veda exist for its sake, and so do the rites laid down by tradition.

V 17.5 Even a gain sought for one's own sake and wanted for happiness is the contrary of this. The knowers of *brahman* declare the gain of the self supreme, because it is eternal.

V 17.6 Since the self's very nature is to be already attained by itself, the gain of it does not come from anything else. A gain that depends on something else arises from seeing something other.

V 17.7 Seeing something other is ignorance, and its destruction is called liberation. Liberation comes through knowledge alone, because knowledge is opposed to ignorance, and not through action.

V 17.8 What action produces is impermanent, because its causes are ignorance and desire. Here, for attaining knowledge, the Veda alone is held to be the means of knowledge.

V 17.9 Because it aims at the single purpose of knowledge, they regard it as one sentence, for the oneness of the self is to be known by understanding the meaning of the sentence.

V 17.10 Difference in it is imagined because of difference in what words denote, and what is denoted is in turn imagined from hearing the words. Three things are declared of the existent: form, name and action.[81]

V 17.11 This triad is unreal, because each of its members is imagined through the others, just as letters heard as sound are given shape elsewhere, outside, by the mind.[82]

V 17.12 And just as a visible shape serves the intellect as a sound, so this whole world is constructed by an intellect in error.

V 17.13 So it is right that this is unreal. Consciousness alone is not imagined. That primal one is also the knowing, while what is known, being other, is imagined.[83]

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81 The triad of name, form and action echoes Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.6.1.
82 The image is of writing: a sound that has been heard is turned by the mind into a written letter, and the written shape then stands for the sound.
83 Shankara plays on *veda*, which means both "knowing" and the scripture.

V 17.14 That by which one knows is called knowing. In dream everything comes about through illusion: that by which one sees is called the eye, and that by which one hears, the ear.[84]

V 17.15 That by which one speaks in a dream is speech, and the same holds for smell, taste and touch, for the mind, and for every other sense.

V 17.16 This knowledge is divided in many ways only by imagined limiting adjuncts, just as a single gem appears different according to the different things it rests on.

V 17.17 In the same way the division of this knowledge is imagined for one who is awake. Through error, one whose actions spring from craving turns the object that lies within the intellect into something external.

V 17.18 As in dream, so in waking, what is outside and what is inside arise from each being conceived through the other, as with writing and recitation.

V 17.19 When he imagines difference, he comes to desire it and resolves accordingly. Desiring something and resolved on it, he attains whatever he has done.[85]

V 17.20 All of this springs from ignorance, so this world is unreal, for it is seen by one who has ignorance and is not perceived in deep sleep.

V 17.21 Knowledge and ignorance, as scripture teaches, are for us the notion of oneness and the notion of something other. That is why scripture prescribes knowledge with every effort.

V 17.22 Knowledge shines in a pure mind as an image does in a clean mirror. So the mind must be purified by the restraints, by the constant observances and by austerities.[86]

V 17.23 To purify it, one should practice the highest austerity, of body and the rest: the composing of the mind and the other faculties, and the wearing down of the body to that end.

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84 *Māyā*, illusion: the power by which what is one appears as many.
85 This echoes Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.5.
86 The restraints (*yama*: nonviolence, truthfulness and the like) and observances (*niyama*: purity, contentment and the like) are the ethical groundwork of yoga discipline.

V 17.24 One-pointedness of mind and senses is the supreme austerity. It is better than all other forms of *dharma* and is called the highest *dharma*.[87]

V 17.25 One should know waking as what is seen and dream as that same thing remembered, deep sleep as their absence, and one's own self as the highest state.

V 17.26 The darkness called deep sleep is ignorance, the seed of dream and waking. Burned by awakening to one's own self, it becomes like a burned seed, which can no longer sprout.

V 17.27 That one seed of illusion should be known to appear threefold, in succession, again and again. The self, the conjurer, though one and free of change, appears as many, like the sun in water.[88]

V 17.28 Just as the one seed is divided into breath, dream and the rest, so the self in the bodies of dream and waking is like the moon reflected in water.[89]

V 17.29 Just as a single conjurer mounts an illusory elephant and seems to go and come, so the self appears within the sphere of breath, dream and the rest.[90]

V 17.30 Just as the conjurer is neither the elephant nor its rider but stands apart, so the knower is neither breath and the rest nor their seer, but is other, always the awareness that sees.

V 17.31 For one whose eyes are not bound there is no illusion and no conjurer either. The illusion exists only for one whose eyes are bound, and so does the conjurer.

V 17.32 He is to be known directly, because scripture speaks of "the self that is direct," and because of the scriptures beginning "The knot of the heart is cut" and "If not …".[91]

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87 *Dharma*: religious duty and virtue, the right order of life.

88 The image is of one sun reflected in many pools, each reflection seeming to be a separate sun.

89 "Breath" (*prāṇa*) here names the seed state of deep sleep, as in Gaudapada's verses on the Mandukya Upanishad.

90 Indian conjurers were famed for making spectators see illusory animals, the elephant above all.

91 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.4.1; Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.8; Kena Upanishad 2.5 ("if one has not known it here, great is the loss").

V 17.33 Since it is without sound and the other sense qualities, it cannot be grasped by the senses. And since it is other than pleasure and the like, how could it be grasped by the intellect?

V 17.34 Rahu, though invisible, is seen on the moon, and an image is seen in water. In the same way the self, though all-pervading, is grasped only in the intellect.[92]

V 17.35 The sun's image and its heat are seen in water, yet they do not belong to the water. In the same way awareness is seen in the intellect, yet it is not a property of the intellect, because their properties differ.

V 17.36 Seeing the modification of the intellect that is joined to the eye, the self, whose seeing is never lost, is the seer of seeing, and likewise the hearer of hearing, as scripture says.[93]

V 17.37 Seeing the bare modification of the mind, the unborn one is the thinker of thought. And because its power is never lost, it is the knower, as scripture teaches with "For there is no loss ...".[94]

V 17.38 Its freedom from change is shown by "it thinks, as it were" and "it moves, as it were." Its purity is shown by "here a thief ..." and by the scripture "untouched ...".[95]

V 17.39 In deep sleep it remains the knower, because its power is not lost, and so it does in waking, because it does not change. The distinction belongs only to what is known. This is the view taken from the scripture "where, as it were ...".[96]

V 17.40 Ordinary seeing, which is of what is not the self, is indirect because of intervening things and the like. Since seeing is the very nature of the self, *brahman* is held to be immediate.

V 17.41 A lamp needs no other lamp to light it up. In the same way, since awareness is the very nature of the self, no other awareness is required to know it.

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92 Rahu is the demon said to swallow the sun and moon at eclipses. He has no visible form of his own and is seen only as a shadow on the moon.
93 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.4.2 and 4.3.23.
94 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.30.
95 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.7 and 4.3.22 ("here a thief is no thief ... untouched by good, untouched by evil").
96 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.31 ("where there is, as it were, another").

V 17.42 Being an object, being subject to change, or being many is not accepted of the self. Therefore the self can be neither rejected nor taken up, whether by itself or by anything else.

V 17.43 Whoever knows, "I am the self, within and without, unaging, beyond birth, death and old age," what could he possibly fear?

V 17.44 Action belongs only to the time before this teaching, because the teaching removes being of a caste and the like, through the certainty, drawn from such scriptures as "not gross …", that "you are that" alone.[97]

V 17.45 Caste and the like are lost when the former body is cast off. So caste and the like belong only to the body, and in this way the body too is shown not to be the self.

V 17.46 Hence the ignorance that says "mine" and "I" about the body and the other things that are not the self must be abandoned through knowledge of the self, according to the scripture "of the demons …".[98]

V 17.47 On becoming a renunciant, one ceases to perform the rites of the ten days of impurity. In the same way, on attaining knowledge, one ceases to perform the actions tied to caste and the like.[99]

V 17.48 The ignorant one, desiring something and resolved on it, attains what he has done. But when the desires of one who sees his own self are released, he is then immortal.[100]

V 17.49 The effect of the teaching about the self's nature is withdrawal from action and the like. The self is neither something to be accomplished nor a means, according to the scripture "ever content."[101]

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97 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.8.8 ("neither gross nor fine").
98 Chandogya Upanishad 8.8.4–5, where the view that the body is the self is called the teaching of the demons (*asuras*).
99 A birth or death in the family brought ten days of ritual impurity with prescribed observances. A renunciant was exempt from them.
100 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.7.
101 Bhagavad Gita 4.20.

V 17.50 The result of action is something to be produced, reached, modified or refined. Action can achieve nothing beyond these, so one should give it up together with its means.

V 17.51 Outward things end in torment, are impermanent and exist for the sake of the self. Therefore the seeker of truth should withdraw into the self the love he has for things outside, and go to a teacher,

V 17.52 one who is tranquil, wise, liberated, free of action and established in *brahman*. So says the scripture, "one who has a teacher knows," and so says the tradition, "know that ...".[102]

V 17.53 Such a teacher should quickly carry the earnest pupil who has a pupil's qualities across the great ocean of inner darkness, on the boat of the knowledge of *brahman*.

V 17.54 Seeing, touching, hearing, smelling, thinking, knowing and the other powers are divided by limiting adjuncts, though their nature is consciousness.

V 17.55 Like the sun, shining always with powers that neither arise nor pass away, the all-seeing, all-pervading, pure one knows everything at all times.

V 17.56 Through ignorance he sees something other, dwells in the body and seems only as large as it. Through such comparisons as the moon in water, he is shown to appear to have its properties.

V 17.57 Having seen what is outside, then closing the eyes and remembering it, then letting that go too, and then opening the self's own seeing, one reaches *brahman* without traveling any road.

V 17.58 Leaving behind in this way the triad of breath and the rest, he has crossed the great ocean of ignorance. Abiding in his own self, without attributes, pure, awake, he is free by his very nature.

V 17.59 "I am unborn, undying, deathless, ageless and fearless, all-knowing, all-seeing and pure." One who has awakened to this is not born.

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102 Chandogya Upanishad 6.14.2; Bhagavad Gita 4.34 ("know that by bowing down, by questioning and by service").

V 17.60 He holds the firm conviction that the seed of darkness spoken of earlier does not exist. When it is absent, how could there be birth for one who knows oneness with *brahman*?

V 17.61 Ghee drawn out of milk and poured back into it does not become as it was before. In the same way the knower, once separated from the intellect and the rest, which are unreal, does not become embodied as before.

V 17.62 Knowing "I am *brahman*, reality, knowledge, infinite, beyond the five that begin with the essence of food, the one scripture calls invisible and so on," I would be free of fear.[103]

V 17.63 Speech, mind, fire and the rest go about their work out of fear of it. One who knows the truth of that bliss which is the self fears nothing from anywhere.[104]

V 17.64 If one abides in the plenitude that lies beyond name and the rest, in self-rule, without a second, to whom should the knower of the self bow down? Then nothing remains to be done by action.[105]

V 17.65 As the outer, it is called Viraj and Vaishvanara; within, while it remembers, it is Prajapati; but when everything has dissolved, it is called Prajna, the unmanifest.[106]

V 17.66 Because they are only a matter of words, the three states, deep sleep and the others, are unreal; "I, the knower, am real"—one who holds fast to the truth in this way is set free.

V 17.67 Just as the sun, being light by nature, has no day or night, so knowledge and ignorance cannot belong to me, for I am consciousness by nature without any distinction.

V 17.68 Since scripture cannot be doubted, I am always *brahman* alone; for me, who am *brahman*, there is nothing to be rejected or accepted—this one should keep in mind.

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103 Taittiriya Upanishad 2.1–5, which defines *brahman* as "reality, knowledge, infinite" and describes five sheaths beginning with the one made of the essence of food; Mundaka Upanishad 1.1.6 ("invisible").

104 Taittiriya Upanishad 2.8–9.

105 The plenitude beyond name and the rest is the summit of Chandogya Upanishad 7.

106 Names for the self in its three states: in waking, Viraj (the cosmic form) or Vaishvanara; in dream, Prajapati; in deep sleep, Prajna.

V 17.69 I alone, one, am in all beings, like space; one who sees all beings in me is not born again.

V 17.70 Nothing other than itself exists anywhere, outside, in the middle or within, for scripture says it is "without inside or outside"; therefore it is pure and self-luminous.

V 17.71 Scriptures such as "not this, not this" show it as the stilling of the manifold world, without a second; and from scriptures such as "unknown" it follows that it cannot be known in any other way than this.

V 17.72 If the supreme *brahman* is known as "I alone am the self of all," then one is the self of all beings, for scripture says, "he is their self."

V 17.73 If the individual self knows the supreme self, the god, directly as its own self, it becomes one whom the gods worship and ceases to be their beast.[107]

V 17.74 "I alone am always the self, the knower, empty of everything else, like space"—one who holds fast to the truth in this way is not bound by meditation on the unreal.

V 17.75 Those who know the supreme *brahman* in any other way are therefore to be pitied. One who is self-ruling, who sees nothing other, who abides in himself—the gods are in his power.

V 17.76 Leaving behind every tie to caste and the like, and other words along with rituals, take refuge in your own self as Om—as all, and pure:[108]

V 17.77 the dam that holds all ordered distinctions apart, free of day and night and the rest; across, above, below, it is all; light once and for all, untouched by any ill.[109]

V 17.78 One should know one's own self as the supreme, free of merit and demerit, of past and future, of what is done and not done, released from all bonds.

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107 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10: whoever worships a deity as other than himself is like a domestic animal to the gods.

108 Om, the sacred syllable, is used in the Upanishads as a support for meditation on the self (Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.5–6).

109 The self as a dam that day and night do not cross, and as light once and for all, comes from Chandogya Upanishad 8.4.1–2.

V 17.79 Doing nothing, it does all; it is pure; standing still, it outruns those who run; because all powers are its own, through illusion it is thought of as manifold, though it is unborn.[110]

V 17.80 Being a mere witness, like a king, and moving things by mere presence, like a magnet, I, the self, set the world in motion while remaining actionless, no agent, without a second.

V 17.81 That which is without qualities, without action, eternal, beyond the pairs of opposites, free of all ill, pure, awake and free —one should hold firmly, "I am that *brahman*."

V 17.82 Since all of this—bondage and liberation, both alike, unity and duality—is to be let go, and the supreme reality, one and utterly pure, beyond what can and cannot be known, has been realized: knowing this exactly as scripture and the sages have declared it, one passes beyond grief and delusion and becomes all-knowing, all-doing, free of the fear of worldly existence—a Brahmin who has done all that was to be done.

V 17.83 The self is not something to be given up, either by itself or by another, and there is no other; nor, likewise, is it something to be taken up. This is held to be right understanding.

V 17.84 For this understanding makes the self known; it is what all the Upanishads are about; knowing it, people are freed from all the bonds of the round of rebirth.

V 17.85 This is the secret of all the Vedas, hard even for the gods to obtain, the supreme purifier; and it is this that has now been fully brought to light.

V 17.86 This secret, the highest knowledge, is not to be given to one who is not at peace; it should be imparted to one who is free of passion, and to a pupil who follows the teacher.

V 17.87 No other repayment exists for the one who gives knowledge of the self; therefore let the one who seeks knowledge cross over, always endowed with the qualities of a pupil.

V 17.88 Homage to the one whose self is knowledge, all-knowing and all-powerful, apart from whom there exists no knowledge, no object of knowledge, no knower.

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110 "Standing still, it outruns those who run" echoes Isha Upanishad 4; on the one appearing as many through illusion, compare Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.5.19.

V 17.89 Homage to those all-knowing teachers by whom, through knowledge, we have been carried across the great ocean of birth and death, teeming with ignorance.

CHAPTER 18: "YOU ARE THAT"

How "you are that" brings liberation: reflection, the ego, and why repeated meditation is not needed.

V 18.1 Homage to the self within the intellect, eternal knowing, in which the states of the mind dissolve and from which they arise.

V 18.2 With the force of words armed with arguments like thunderbolts, he crushed the enemies of scripture by the hundred; with his vast intellect he guarded the treasure that is the meaning of the Veda: homage to that lord of renunciants, more venerable than a teacher.[111]

V 18.3 If the understanding "I am eternally free, being itself" were not to arise, why would revered scripture, like a mother, teach us this so insistently?

V 18.4 From the self-evident "I," the attributes of the "you" are negated by teachings such as "you are that," just as reasoning removes the idea of a snake from a rope.[112]

V 18.5 Just as the existence of merit and the like is known on the authority of scripture, and just as poison is removed by meditation, so evil is removed.

V 18.6 The notions "I am being, *brahman*" and "I act" both have the self as their witness; of the two, it is held more reasonable to give up the one born of ignorance.

V 18.7 The understanding "I am being" arises from a means of knowledge; the other arises from something that only resembles one. Or, even if it resembles perception and the like, it is canceled, like confusion about directions.

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111 The lord of renunciants is not named here; tradition takes him to be a teacher in Shankara's own line.

112 "You" (*yuṣmad*, the second person) stands here for the objective sphere, the not-self, as against the self-evident "I" (*asmad*).

V 18.8 The scripture that speaks of an "agent" and an "enjoyer" merely restates worldly understanding; the understanding "I am being," born of scripture, cancels the other.

V 18.9 When one is told "you are being itself," the freedom of the self does not become firm; therefore one undertakes repeated meditation, and should reflect on it with reasoning.[113]

V 18.10 Even one who knows the meaning of the sentence does not grasp it when it is said once; he needs something further—and that is why we spoke of both.

V 18.11 Because the meaning has not yet been grasped, there can be an injunction, as there is for ritual action; and it does not conflict with the teaching so long as the experience has not become firm.

V 18.12 And because activity, false as it is, goes on at its own will, repeated meditation must be practiced until the self is experienced.

V 18.13 The notion born of the senses, with its firmly rooted impressions, surely cancels the awareness "I am being" that arises from words, and one is dragged outward by faults.

V 18.14 Since the notions produced by scripture and by inference have general objects, the notion born of the senses must override them where particular objects are concerned.

V 18.15 No one who has grasped the meaning of the sentence is found to be free of suffering; or, if someone is seen to be free of suffering merely from hearing the meaning of the sentence,

V 18.16 then it is inferred that he had done the practice in earlier bodies. If it were otherwise, our course of practice would not be known from scripture, and that would be unwelcome.

V 18.17 For after stating the result—"you are being"—scripture must enjoin a means, and here no means other than repeated meditation is accepted for reaching that declared goal.

V 18.18 Therefore one should meditate repeatedly and with effort, solely for the sake of experience, giving up whatever con-

113 Repeated meditation (*prasaṃkhyāna*) means dwelling on the meaning of the scriptural sentence until it is experienced; verses 18.9–18 state the case for it, and Shankara answers from 18.19.

flicts with the means and with what it brings about, and possessed of tranquility and the rest.

V 18.19 No, it is not so, for the secret teachings culminate in "not this, not this." What is to be achieved by action would have to be taught first; liberation is not of that kind, since it is eternally accomplished.

V 18.20 Just as a father superimposes his son's suffering on his own self, which does not suffer, so the ego, the agent, is superimposed on one's own self, which is eternally free of suffering.

V 18.21 That superimposition is negated by "not this, not this," as something that had been present; no further injunction to repeated practice can be justified on any ground.

V 18.22 Here, superimposition on the self and its negation are of the same kind, just as the unwise superimpose dirt on the sky and then deny it.

V 18.23 If something really present were negated, liberation would certainly be impermanent; so this is a negation of what was never there, like the rule against building the fire altar in heaven.[114]

V 18.24 A word or a notion can apply to an object, and not otherwise; neither can apply to the self, since it is their very self, and likewise the self of the ego.

V 18.25 Agency and the rest, which have been placed on consciousness, the self of the ego—all of that, together with the ego, is negated by "not this, not this."

V 18.26 It is awareness itself, self-luminous, the awareness that sees, inward, ever actionless, immediate, innermost of all, the witness, the knower, eternal, free of qualities, without a second.

V 18.27 Because it is always present, there comes to be something that bears its reflection and claims it as itself; hence the pair, the self and what is one's own, the sphere of "I" and "mine."

V 18.28 Words apply to the ego, because it has a kind, an action and the like; no word applies to one's own self, for it has none of these.

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114 A Vedic rule says the fire altar is not to be built in the sky or in heaven—a prohibition of something that could never happen in the first place.

V 18.29 Words, which stay only where the reflection is, can point to the inner awareness that sees, but can never denote it directly.

V 18.30 No thing that lacks a kind and the like is ever defined by words; but since the ego is a reflection of the self, it is accordingly spoken of with words for the self,

V 18.31 just as words meaning fire are used of a firebrand and the like because their meaning belongs to something else, not literally. And just as the reflection of a face is other than the face, since it follows the mirror,

V 18.32 so the face, too, is other than the reflection, since it does not follow the mirror. The appearance of the self in the ego is held to be like the reflection of a face.

V 18.33 The self is regarded as different, like the face; yet, in the same way, the two are not told apart. And some say that the one subject to the round of rebirth is the reflection in the ego.

V 18.34 Some hold that a reflection is a real thing, because it is remembered as something different, and because it causes sweetness and the like. In the case of the supreme, the locus of its reflection is neither a part of it nor a modification of it.[115]

V 18.35 Some say that the ego itself, independent, is the one subject to the round of rebirth. Others say that the series of ego and the rest is what undergoes rebirth, and that there is no separate entity persisting through it.

V 18.36 So say the Buddhists; let the reasoning on that be examined. But enough talk about those subject to rebirth; now the matter at hand is taken up.[116]

V 18.37 The reflection of a face in a mirror is not a property of either one of them; if it were a property of one of the two, it would remain when the other is separated from it.

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115 The word for reflection, *chāyā*, also means shadow and shade; the argument that follows turns on both senses.

116 The Buddhists (*saugata*, "followers of the Sugata," the Buddha) deny an abiding self beneath the stream of mental events.

V 18.38 If you hold that it belongs to the face alone because it is named after the face—no, because it follows the mirror, and is absent even while the face is there.

V 18.39 If you say it belongs to both, that is not so, for it is not seen even where both are present. It might be the seeing of something that exists but is invisible, as with Rahu in the moon and the sun.

V 18.40 Rahu's reality was already established on the authority of scripture; but on the view that it is a shadow, its unreality would follow from the reasoning given before.

V 18.41 This statement rules out the view that a shadow covers them, but it does not prove that it is a real thing; for a sentence devoted to one meaning should not be made to state another.

V 18.42 And sweetness and the like, as an effect, come from not consuming hot substances and the like, not from the shade, since the shade is not seen to cause it, and only the water is seen.

V 18.43 Through scripture and reasoning, the loci of the self's reflection are understood just as the loci of a face's reflection are, and so too is the unreality of the reflection.

V 18.44 Not the awareness that sees, since it is free of change; not the reflection, since it is unreal; not the ego, since it lacks consciousness. To whom, then, could the round of rebirth belong?[117]

V 18.45 Therefore let the round of rebirth be mere ignorance, arising from a failure to discriminate. Through the changeless self it always has a self, as though it were in the self.

V 18.46 Just as the rope-snake has the rope for its self until discrimination comes, even though it is not real, so too does this, through the changeless self.

V 18.47 Some say that the self, the one that bears the reflection of the self, changes through its own cognitions and is happy and unhappy and caught in the round of rebirth, and yet is eternal.

117 "Ego" renders *ahaṃkartṛ*, literally the "I-doer": the sense of oneself as the agent of action.

V 18.48 They are deluded because they do not truly understand the reflection of the self, and so they take the ego to be the self. They have no scripture on their side.

V 18.49 For them the round of rebirth, marked by being an agent and an enjoyer, is real. Since they do not know what it is that bears the reflection of the self, they keep wandering in that round through lack of discrimination.

V 18.50 If the intellect bears a reflection of consciousness, and consciousness is the self's own nature, then it makes sense that the Veda teaches by means of words for knowing.

V 18.51 The meanings of root and ending are distinct, yet common usage shows them to have a single locus, as in "he does," "he goes," and the like.[118]

V 18.52 But neither common usage nor tradition shows these two having two separate loci. So tell us: what reason is there for the meanings in "knows" to have two loci?

V 18.53 The reflection of the self is what the personal ending denotes, and the meaning of the root is the action of the intellect. Because the two are not told apart, both together are falsely expressed as "knows."

V 18.54 The intellect has no awareness, and the self has no action. So "knows" cannot properly be said of either one.

V 18.55 For the same reason, the self cannot properly be called "knowing" with a noun of action either. The self is not mere change, because scripture teaches that the self is eternal.

V 18.56 Nor can the intellect be what the word *buddhi*, taken as the instrument of knowing, denotes, for there is no instrument without an agent. Nor is the self described by words for an object, as in "it is known."

V 18.57 Some do not hold that the self is one alone, always free of suffering and free of change. For them the self may well be always expressible in words and always knowable as an object.

118 In Sanskrit grammar a finite verb is analyzed into a root (*prakṛti*), which expresses the action, and a personal ending (*pratyaya*, technically *tiṅ*), which expresses the agent.

V 18.58 If the ego were the self, these words would have their primary meaning. But scripture does not accept the ego as the self, because it is subject to hunger and the rest.[119]

V 18.59 Well then, suppose words such as "knows" have no primary meaning and in no way a figurative one either. You must still say how they are to be understood.

V 18.60 If words did not convey their meanings truly, the Veda too would not be a means of knowledge, and no one accepts that. So the way this word is understood must be taken from common usage.

V 18.61 If the usage of deluded people is what we must accept, then there is no self. The doctrine of the materialists follows, and that is unwelcome.[120]

V 18.62 If it is the usage of the learned, it is as hard to sort out as before. Yet surely the Veda, a means of knowledge, does not speak without any way of being understood?

V 18.63 People accept that a face has something in common with the face in a mirror, for the reflection of a face is seen in the form of the face.[121]

V 18.64 Wherever one thing is reflected in another, everyone naturally speaks of the action "knows," because they do not tell those two apart.

V 18.65 People superimpose the agency of the intellect on the knower and so say of the knower, "he knows." In the same way they superimpose consciousness on the intellect and so speak of the intellect as a knower.

V 18.66 Knowledge is the very nature of the self, since scripture calls it eternal light. Therefore it is never produced by the intellect, nor by the self, nor by anything else.

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119 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.5.1 describes the self as beyond hunger and thirst, sorrow and delusion, old age and death.

120 The Lokāyatas, or materialists, held that only the perceptible world exists and that consciousness arises from the body and ends with it.

121 The face and the mirror: the chapter's central image. Consciousness is reflected in the intellect as a face is reflected in a mirror, and the reflection is mistaken for the original.

V 18.67 Ordinary people take the notion "I" to refer to the body. In just the same way they say "he knows," attributing the agency of knowing to the intellect and likewise to the self.

V 18.68 The logicians are deluded by the intellect's own cognitions, which are produced and which resemble consciousness. So they say that knowledge is produced.[122]

V 18.69 So words such as "knows," the cognition itself, and the memory of it all come about because the knower, its reflection, and the intellect are not told apart.

V 18.70 The way a reflection conforms to the mirror is attributed to the face. In the same way, it is held that the reflection of the knower imitates the properties of the intellect.

V 18.71 Therefore the intellect's cognitions, lit up by the reflection of the self, appear to be perceivers, just as firebrands and the like appear to be what burns.

V 18.72 The Buddhists deny that a perceiver exists. They say the cognitions are illuminated by themselves and are themselves the perceivers.

V 18.73 If so, they are not seen by anything else. Then tell us what rules out another perceiver, if indeed their presence and absence, while they exist, are not grasped by something other than themselves.

V 18.74 Some say their perceiver is something that runs through them all. That fares no better, for it too would lack consciousness, and there would then be yet another perceiver.

V 18.75 Perhaps you hold that they are established in the presence of the overseer. No: the overseer does nothing for them, and the same would then follow for other things as well.

V 18.76 The hearer is the one who wants something and suffers. Is he the overseer, or the other? You do not hold that the overseer suffers or wants anything.

V 18.77 The agent can never rightly lay hold of the thought "I am the overseer, being itself." And for scripture to make the false statement "you are being itself" is not acceptable either.

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122 The logicians (*tārkikas*) are the Nyāya school, which treated cognition as a quality that arises in the self and then passes away.

V 18.78 If scripture speaks of the two without distinguishing them, the understanding will be equally undistinguished. But suppose it spoke only after setting the overseer apart from the "I," and said "you yourself"—

V 18.79 then it would follow that the word refers to what runs through the cognitions, and that has the fault already stated. If instead "you" refers to the overseer, how are the "I" and the overseer related?

V 18.80 A relation must be stated here by which the word "you" could point to it. If it is the relation of seer and seen, how could that hold for the overseer, which does not act?

V 18.81 Suppose the overseer, though it does not act, were identical with the "I." Since that relation is not grasped, the thought would still be "I have a self, the overseer."

V 18.82 Perhaps you think the relation is grasped from scripture. No: either the three faults stated earlier would follow, or the grasp would take the form "mine."

V 18.83 When the intellect, which is not awareness, shines in the form of awareness, its cognitions too would shine in that way, like sparks from red-hot iron.

V 18.84 The reflection of awareness and its absence occur at the boundary of awareness, and not otherwise. That being so, people's usage would make sense by reasoning, and so would the grasping of awareness.

V 18.85 But in that case, wouldn't awareness pass over into the intellect, as fire passes into a lump of iron? That has been ruled out by the comparison with the reflection of a face in a mirror.

V 18.86 The black iron that appears red is mentioned as something actually observed. But an example is never the same in every respect as what it illustrates.

V 18.87 In just this way the mind, in which consciousness is reflected, would seem conscious. But like the reflection of a face in a mirror, the reflection is declared to be false.

V 18.88 That the mind is conscious has no support in scripture or reasoning. If it were, it would follow that the body is conscious too, and so too the eye and the rest.

V 18.89 If you say, "Let that be so too," no, for that is to side with the materialists. And if there were no reflection in the mind, there would be no thought "I am awareness."

V 18.90 Without the thought "I am being," even "you are that" would be pointless. This saying has meaning for one who knows the distinction between what is meant by "you" and by "I."

V 18.91 The notions "mine" and "this" must be understood to fall within the "you" alone. Of that there is no doubt. The notion "I" is held to belong to the "I," and the notion "I am this" to both.

V 18.92 In relation to one another these are held to be principal and subordinate. Reasoning shows that the relation of qualifier and qualified must be understood in the same way.

V 18.93 Both "mine" and "this" qualify the middle term, just as in "a man of wealth" or "a man with cows." In the same way the body too qualifies the ego.

V 18.94 Everything always rests on the intellect, and the intellect together with the ego is the object of the witness. Therefore the knower illuminates everything and never touches anything at all.

V 18.95 All of this, as described, runs counter to ordinary understanding. For those whose minds do not discriminate, it all exists. For those who discriminate, none of it does.

V 18.96 Both a word's meaning and the word itself are open to the method of agreement and difference. That method applies here, to "I," for reasoning is what settles the matter.[123]

V 18.97 When someone says of deep sleep, "I saw nothing else at all," he does not rule out his own seeing. He denies only the cognition.

V 18.98 With the words "self-luminous" and "for there is no loss of the seer's seeing," scripture itself has stated that consciousness exists and is changeless, and that the cognition lapses. Cognition and realization are distinct.[124]

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123 Agreement and difference (*anvaya* and *vyatireka*): noting what is present when something else is present and absent when it is absent. The method separates what persists from what comes and goes.

124 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.9 and 4.3.23, from the account of dream and deep sleep.

V 18.99 Once the meaning of the sentence has been understood in this way, from scripture and from common usage, scripture says "you are that" to dispel the hearer's delusion.

V 18.100 In the same way Brahma dispelled the darkness of Dasharatha's son by words alone, and spoke of no further effort to awaken him to his being Vishnu.[125]

V 18.101 The ground on which the word "I" rests is the light, the inner self. That very ground is what "you are being" states, and the result is liberation.

V 18.102 If liberation did not come from merely hearing this, there would certainly be something still to be done. But the existence of the self, of itself, is accepted even before all worldly dealings.

V 18.103 At that very moment valid knowledge of the meaning of sentences such as "you are that" arises, bringing freedom from hunger and the rest. It is free of doubt in all three times: past, present and future.

V 18.104 Nothing obstructs it, and the self is by nature experience itself. So valid knowledge must arise there, about one's own self. Of that there is no doubt.

V 18.105 Does one understand "I am being itself," or something else? If it is being itself, then let the word "I" be accepted as having being for its primary meaning.

V 18.106 If it is something else, the understanding that takes being as "I" is simply false. Therefore, once the primary meaning is grasped, nothing here obstructs realization.

V 18.107 The one who has cognitions and the cognition itself are both reflections of something, and they exist for its sake. Since both lack consciousness, the result is assigned to consciousness.

V 18.108 The result befits even what is changeless, as victory and the like befit a king, on two grounds: action and cognition are not the self, and the self is the reason for them.

125 In the Ramayana the creator god Brahma tells Rama, son of King Dasharatha, that he is in truth the god Vishnu.

V 18.109 A mirror bears the reflection of something, and the form of the face in it is that very face. Just so, the mirror of cognition bears the reflection of something, and that is what I am.

V 18.110 In this way, and not otherwise, the understanding "I am being" can arise. Without it, even the teaching "you are that" would be pointless, for it would have no way in.

V 18.111 If the teaching is for the hearer, then it has meaning. But if you do not accept that the overseer is the hearer, then who is the hearer?

V 18.112 Perhaps you hold that hearing belongs to the intellect alone, in the presence of the overseer. No: the overseer does nothing for it, just as no help is supposed in the case of wood and the like.

V 18.113 If you say that it does something for the intellect, then surely it would be subject to change. But what fault is there in its having a reflection, when scripture and the other sources support this?[126]

V 18.114 If you say that having a reflection means change, no. As I have said, it is like a snake and the like appearing in the likeness of a rope and the like, and like a face appearing in a mirror.

V 18.115 If you say that it cannot be established that this is a reflection of the self, because the self is not grasped on its own, whereas a face and the like are established separately, and that here there is mutual dependence—

V 18.116 the reflection would be the overseer's only if the overseer were established separately, and the overseer would be something distinct only if the reflection were its own.

V 18.117 Not so, for in dream the notion and the seeing are each established separately. Since there are no chariots and the like there, the notion is grasped by the self.[127]

V 18.118 For the notion arises pervaded by knowing and takes the form of an object. The thing whose form it takes is held to be the external object.

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126 The intellect is said to take on a reflection of consciousness, as a mirror takes on the reflection of a face.

127 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.10 says of dream: "There are no chariots there."

V 18.119 Because it is what is most sought, the thing that has that form is assigned to the act as its object. That into which the form is placed is called here the instrument.[128]

V 18.120 That which is pervaded by its reflection is called the knower. Whoever distinguishes these three here and knows them knows the self.

V 18.121 Notions called right, doubtful and false come and go. Through them all the knowing is one and the same, and the difference is imposed on it by the notions.

V 18.122 Just as a crystal varies with the different things set beside it, so does knowing. Impurity, change and all the rest come from its dependence on notions.

V 18.123 The shining forth, grasping and establishing of notions come here from something other than them. Because of its immediacy, that very thing has been called an inference, as with a lamp.

V 18.124 Could anyone make that other known by some means of knowledge? It is known without any means of knowledge at all, as what remains once the other has been removed.

V 18.125 If you say that the removal is brought about here by the word alone, as a means of knowledge, then, since the overseer is not known, only emptiness would follow.

V 18.126 If you say, "You are conscious—how could you be the body?", no, because the conscious one is not known. Only if it were established by something else could this come about by excluding the other.

V 18.127 The overseer simply exists by itself, because the conscious is immediately present. Otherwise the awakening would be no different from that of one who teaches that the other does not exist.

V 18.128 Because people remember, "I knew this," it is claimed that the instrument, the object and the agent are established in a single moment.

128 This follows the grammarian Panini's definition of the object as "what the agent most wants to reach" (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.4.49).

V 18.129 Even if memory is valid, their simultaneity is only imagined, because of speed. The grasping came first, in sequence, and the memory afterward, in the same way.

V 18.130 In "I knew this, and myself," a dependence surely arises, and where a qualifier is required there is no simultaneity.

V 18.131 And if the self grasped itself, all three would arise here. But the agency that rests in the self could not belong to the instrument and the object.

V 18.132 What the agent wants to reach by the action is called the object. So it is held to depend on the agent, not on anything else.

V 18.133 For one who does not know them, all things are established from the word, from inference, or from some other means of knowledge, and not otherwise.

V 18.134 The overseer too might be established either by a means of knowledge or with no means at all. But its being established in itself, without one, is of no use to one who does not know.

V 18.135 If you hold that the overseer itself is the one who does not know, then for it to know, another cognition would be needed. And if someone else is the one who does not know, then for that one to know, a cognition would certainly be needed.

V 18.136 Being established is either being known, or coming into existence, or something else again. If it is being known, you should recall the two positions just stated.

V 18.137 If being established is coming into existence, effort there is pointless, since the whole world knows that a thing comes into existence from its own causes.

V 18.138 Therefore, when knowledge, the knowable and the like are discussed, being established means being known. The establishment of the overseer and of what it oversees is their being knowable, not their coming into existence.

V 18.139 If being established is taken to be the clearness of the object, the agent and the rest, then clearness and unclearness would belong to something else, and not to the self.

V 18.140 A pot does not become clear to one who does not see, to a blind man. So if clearness is granted to the agent and the rest, their seeing is the overseer's doing.

V 18.141 Tell me: in your view, does experience depend on anything other than itself? If you hold that it depends on an experiencer, that experiencer too is, for us, experience itself.

V 18.142 Though the intellect itself is undivided, those whose vision is distorted see it as though it were divided into the grasped, the grasper and awareness.[129]

V 18.143 "For those for whom being is action, that same being is also said to be the factor of action." If its existence is its perishing, then you should likewise accept that it has an agent.[130]

V 18.144 If you say that no attribute at all is admitted, you abandon your own position. If you say that existence and the like are attributes only as exclusions of nonexistence and the like—[131]

V 18.145 then perishing does not belong to being, for you hold that it has only its own unique character. Perishing is the limit of the unique particular, and perishing would be merely the exclusion of not perishing.

V 18.146 For you, cowhood is the absence of non-cow, not the defining mark of cowhood. Even what is meant by the word "moment" is, for you, nothing but the absence of something else.

V 18.147 Although an absence has no difference within it, you admit difference through names. But how, for you, could one thing become many through differences of name?

V 18.148 If exclusion applies to things that differ, how does it apply to the cow? Absences cannot in any way be what differentiates, nor can they all be particulars, just as, for you, name, genus and the like cannot differentiate consciousness, since it has no distinctions.

V 18.149 Whatever perception or inference you accept in practical life must surely be accepted together with the distinctions of action and its factors.

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129 A verse of the Buddhist logician Dharmakirti (7th century AD, *Pramāṇavārttika*), stating the Yogācāra view that only consciousness is real.

130 A Buddhist dictum. Since all things are held to be momentary, a thing's very being is its activity.

131 The Buddhist theory of exclusion (*apoha*): a word means not a positive universal but the exclusion of everything else, so "cow" means "not non-cow."

V 18.150 Therefore blue and yellow, or a pot and the like, must be accepted as qualifiers of consciousness, and so must that by which it is experienced.

V 18.151 Just as there is a grasper other than color and the like, because they are grasped, so there must be something other than the notion, which reveals it, like a lamp.

V 18.152 What relation could the overseer, which is seeing, have with what it oversees, the seen, apart from that of seer and seen?

V 18.153 Either the seeing brought about by the overseer pervades the seen, or else the eternal overseer renders some help to cognitions.

V 18.154 That help has already been stated: their taking on its likeness. And cognition pervades pots and the like as light and the like pervade them, because cognition reveals.

V 18.155 Just as a pot stands in the light, so it comes to stand in the intellect. The pot's entry into the intellect is its pervasion by cognition, and in this pervasion by cognition there would be a sequence.

V 18.156 First would come the pervasion by the notion, then the help from the self. But for the overseer of everything, sequence is no more fitting than it is for time, space and the like.

V 18.157 That which grasps objects by depending on instruments, and only while something remains to be grasped, is subject to change, like the mind.

V 18.158 The knowledge "I am the overseer" is a determination of the intellect alone, not of the overseer, because the overseer is without distinctions and there is nothing beyond it.

V 18.159 If liberation were experienced by an agent as "I," that would not fit, for release from pleasure and pain is not possible for the ego that makes the "I."

V 18.160 The notion "I am in pain" surely arises from identification with the body and the like, as the notion "I have earrings" does. And by one who identifies with the inner self

V 18.161 it is canceled here: the notion that lacks discrimination is canceled by the notion that discriminates. Were it the other

way round, it would end in what is unreal, since a means of knowledge would then not be a means of knowledge.

V 18.162 When there is burning, cutting or destruction, the self is in pain in this way and in no other. For no one is ever in pain when someone else is burned or the like.

V 18.163 Because I am beyond touch and without a body, I can never be burned. So the pain arises from false identification, as when one feels death because one's son has died.

V 18.164 Just as "I have earrings" is canceled by one who discriminates, so too is the notion "I am in pain," together with the bare notion "I."

V 18.165 If being in pain were real, one would have to grant the Veda a power to act on the self. But one is in pain through false identification, and so the Veda is able to accomplish its purpose.

V 18.166 The self is beyond touch, yet one sees touch in it. It does not move, yet one sees movement and the like in it. In the same way, through lack of discrimination, one sees in the self the pain that belongs to the mind.

V 18.167 Through the notion of the self that discriminates, pain is dispelled, as movement and the like are. The mind, undiscriminating by nature, moves on even when one does not wish it.

V 18.168 Then, indeed, pain is seen. When the mind is still, it has none. Therefore pain is not possible in the inner self.

V 18.169 Since "you" and "being" share the same referent, this would be like "a blue horse." Through its connection with the word that means what is free of pain, the word "you" comes to have that meaning.[132]

V 18.170 Likewise, through the word "that" being joined with what denotes the inner self, the sentence comes to concern the inner self, as with "You are the tenth."

V 18.171 For without giving up their own meanings, the two words convey a qualified meaning that culminates in the realization of the inner self. No other meaning is possible, since it would conflict with what they mean.

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132 Words in apposition qualify one another, as "blue" and "horse" do in "a blue horse."

V 18.172 A man whose attention is carried off by the nine fails to see himself, the one who completes the ten, and simply wants to know who the tenth is. In the same way a person wants to know his own self.

V 18.173 Because his eyes are bound by ignorance and his mind is always carried off by desire, he does not see the self, the seeing that stands apart, just as that man did not see the tenth.

V 18.174 Just as a man learns from "You are the tenth," so one learns from sentences like "you are that" to know one's own self, the seer of the whole inner organ.

V 18.175 In the Veda there is no rule that in a sentence this word must come first and that one after. The words are connected through their meaning.

V 18.176 Hence the meaning of a sentence is conveyed through agreement and difference, for in a sentence the meanings of the words one hears are recalled.

V 18.177 When the meanings of the words in the eternal sentences of the Veda have been sorted out, no question is called for before the knowledge of the sentence's meaning arises.

V 18.178 Agreement and difference are taught so that the meanings of the words may be recalled, for without that recollection no one can know the meaning of a sentence.

V 18.179 In sentences like "you are that," because the meaning of the word "you" has not been discriminated, the meaning of the sentence, "I am eternally free," does not become clear.

V 18.180 Agreement and difference are taught for that discrimination and for nothing else. For once the meaning of the word "you" has been discriminated, like a bilva fruit placed in the hand,[133]

V 18.181 the meaning of the sentence becomes evident as the pure meaning of the word "I," once "I am in pain" has been excluded and the inner self ascertained.

V 18.182 Where a meaning is possible in this way, those skilled in the meanings of words and sentences should not invent an

133 The bilva, or wood apple. A fruit held in the open hand is a stock image for what is plainly evident.

understanding that drops what scripture says and supplies what it does not say.

V 18.183 If you say that perception and the other means can override a sentence, as with the "cooking" of the gold pieces: how could a sentence be overridden by these, which only look like sense perception and the rest?[134]

V 18.184 If you say that while the knowledge "I am in pain" is present, the knowledge "I am free of pain" does not arise, no. Though the former looks like perception and the rest, the latter does arise from the sentence, because the former does not hold constant.

V 18.185 If in dream the superimposition "I am in pain," caused by burning, cutting and the like, is not canceled by sentences heard at the time,

V 18.186 then where, before the pain is over, should its cancellation be admitted? For a continuing stream of pain, or of the error, is never seen.

V 18.187 If one knows the inner self as one's self by canceling "I am in pain," as the one who counted nine came to know the tenth, there is no contradiction.

V 18.188 The knowledge that one is eternally free comes from the sentence and from nothing else. Knowledge of the sentence's meaning, in turn, is preceded by the recollection of the meanings of the words.

V 18.189 The meaning of a word is surely recalled through agreement and difference. In this way one comes to know the self as free of pain and without action.

V 18.190 From sentences such as "Being alone ...," valid knowledge of the inner self becomes clearer, just as it does from "You are the tenth."[135]

134 A Vedic rite prescribes "cooking" small pieces of gold (*kṛṣṇala*). Since gold cannot be softened, Mimamsa takes the word in another sense.

135 Chandogya Upanishad 6.2.1: "In the beginning, my dear, this was being alone, one only, without a second."

V 18.191 As all the pain of a dream ceases on waking, so through the notion of the inner self the self's being in pain ceases for good.

V 18.192 With the gold pieces and the like, knowledge of another meaning arises because they cannot be softened. It is not so with sentences like "you are that," since there is no contradiction there.

V 18.193 In the sentence "you are that," the word "that" has a known meaning, while the meaning of "you" is not established. Without help in establishing the meaning of "you," the sentence would not produce valid knowledge.

V 18.194 The word "are" serves to show that "that" and "you" have the same referent. The word "that" means the inner self, and "you," in the same way, means what the word "that" means.

V 18.195 The two together keep the inner self apart from being in pain, and so, each through the other, they convey the meaning "not this, not this."

V 18.196 When the result of "you are that" is understood in this way, how can one call it no means of knowledge and say that it depends on action?

V 18.197 Therefore an injunction to "do" should not be supposed at the beginning, the end or the middle, since it would conflict with the sentence and is not stated there. To abandon what is stated is also pointless.

V 18.198 Just as satisfaction is experienced from eating and is not understood from a sentence, so the removal of pain by a sentence is like turning cow dung into milk pudding.

V 18.199 True: a sentence whose meaning is something other than the self gives only indirect understanding in this way. But it is not so with the inner self, and the knowledge is not uncertain, as with reaching the Sarayu.[136]

V 18.200 Let it be accepted that the self is its own means of knowledge, another way of saying that it is known by itself. For us,

136 The Sarayu, a river in northern India, here stands for something known only by report.

the experience of one's own self is established once the "this" has been removed.

V 18.201 Pain is an object of the intellect's cognitions. How could pain be connected with the inner self, the seeing, which is held to have no objects?

V 18.202 Awareness that sees is experienced by itself alone, its very nature being experience. The arising of a cognition as its reflection is what is called its experience.

V 18.203 "You yourself are liberation, already achieved, free of hunger and the rest"—and also "You must hear," and so on. How can such contradictory things be said?[137]

V 18.204 If you say it should be "It will be achieved," then hearing and the rest would have a place, but liberation would then be impermanent. So there is a contradiction, and the statement cannot be taken in any other way.

V 18.205 If a difference between the hearer and what is to be heard were accepted, this could be so. But that would overturn the intended meaning, so the statement makes no sense at all.

V 18.206 If someone has known himself as "I am liberation, already achieved" and still wants to do something, he is deluded, and he undermines the scripture as well.

V 18.207 For there is nothing to be done by one who has achieved, and one who still has something to do has not achieved. Whoever holds on to both deceives himself.

V 18.208 "You are liberation, already achieved" only shows how things really are. But when the hearer does not know that it is so, how is he to set about anything?

V 18.209 "I am an agent, I am in pain" is experienced by perception. From that comes the effort, "May I not be an agent, may I not be in pain."

V 18.210 For that knowledge, scripture has said that reasoning and the rest must be undertaken. It restates agency and the rest, but only so that what is already achieved may be experienced.

137 Free of hunger and the rest: Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.5.1. "You must hear" refers to Brihadaranyaka 2.4.5, where the self is to be heard about, reflected on and meditated upon.

V 18.211 Having grasped "I am free of pain, without action, without desire—liberation, already achieved," how could he take up anything of contrary meaning?

V 18.212 How is it that I experience myself as having desires, as acting, as not yet achieved? Please, sir, explain this to me, who am the opposite of that.

V 18.213 A question is fitting here, but not about the experience of being free. What deserves a question here is whatever conflicts with a means of knowledge.

V 18.214 The knowledge "I am free" arises from another means of knowledge, "you are being." It is being in pain that deserves the question, since it is produced by what merely looks like perception.

V 18.215 What is asked and wanted must be answered: the absence of pain that is sought. "How can this pain of mine cease completely?"

V 18.216 What is to be said in answer to such a question is what removes pain. Since scripture is a means of knowledge in its own right, there is no doubt about it.

V 18.217 Therefore that statement makes known that the self is free, and what is to be said must have that meaning, so long as nothing contradicts it.

V 18.218 No other experience of the self than this is possible, for scripture speaks of it as "not understood by those who understand" and as "the knower."[138]

V 18.219 For discriminating the meaning of the word "you," the renunciation of all actions does become a means, because of the teaching "calm, controlled."[139]

V 18.220 One should see the meaning of "you," the inner self, as the self within oneself. Then one sees the meaning of the sentence: the self alone, as everything.

V 18.221 When he has understood through the means of knowledge the meaning of the sentence, "All is the self," and no other

138 Kena Upanishad 2.3; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.4.2: "You cannot know the knower of knowing."

means of knowledge remains for him, how could an injunction engage him?

V 18.222 Therefore, once the meaning of the sentence is known, there can be no further injunction to action. For the two contradictory cognitions, "I am *brahman*" and "I am an agent," do not occur together.

V 18.223 This knowledge, "I am *brahman*," is not canceled by the notions "I am an agent," "I have desires," "I am bound," which spring from what only looks like a means of knowledge.

V 18.224 From scripture, the understanding "I am *brahman*, I am no other" should become firm. Only when it is established is it knowledge, as firm as the notion that the self is the body.

V 18.225 One who has gone from the fearful to the fearless, and has striven for that, does not wish to go back to the fearful if he is free to choose.

V 18.226 How could license to act as one pleases follow from the injunction of renunciation and the rest, for one who has become aware of his ignorance of the meaning of the words and seeks to experience the meaning of the sentence? Therefore all that we have said before is established.

V 18.227 One who has turned away from a thing does not act for its sake. Since he has turned away from the three worlds, why would one who seeks liberation strive for anything?

V 18.228 Even one tormented by hunger does not want to eat poison. One whose hunger has been taken away by fine food will certainly not want to eat it, if he knows it for what it is and is not deluded.

V 18.229 Homage to the true teacher who, like a bee, gathered for us the finest honey, the nectar of knowledge, from the flowers that are the sentences of the Upanishads.

139 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.23: the knower becomes "calm, controlled, withdrawn, patient and collected."

CHAPTER 19: APPLYING THE REMEDY

The self urges the mind to calm, since duality is imagined and the self is unborn.

V 19.1 Whoever applies the cure that destroys the fever of craving, the medicine of knowledge and dispassion, does not fall into the misery of being joined to garland after garland of hundreds of bodies, the misery that comes from the delirious fever of desire.[140]

V 19.2 Thinking "I" and "mine," you strive for what is useless, and others hold that what you strive for is for the sake of another. But you have no awareness of any purpose, and I have no wants. So calm alone is fitting for you, mind.[141]

V 19.3 Since I am not other than the supreme, the eternal, I am always content, and so I want nothing. Always content, I desire no benefit. Strive, mind, for your own calm; that is better for you.

V 19.4 The one who has passed beyond the chain of the six waves is, as scripture teaches, the self of the world and of us, and I know it through the means of knowledge. So your striving, mind, is in vain.[142]

V 19.5 When you are calm, there is no notion of difference, the notion through which the world falls into delusion by illusion. Grasping is the cause of what springs from illusion, and once there is release from grasping, illusion exists for no one.

V 19.6 Your activity causes me no delusion, for I am awake to reality, unbound and free of change. For us there is no difference between an earlier reality and a later one. So your striving, mind, is in vain.

V 19.7 Since I am eternal, I am never otherwise, for to be joined with change would mean impermanence. I am always shining,

140 In this closing chapter the self addresses the mind. In Indian medicine *saṃnipāta* is a grave fever in which all three bodily humors are disturbed at once.
141 Sāṃkhya holds that the mind and the rest of nature act for the sake of spirit (*puruṣa*).

and so I am without a second. It stands settled that what is imagined is unreal.

V 19.8 Mind, your nature here is nonexistence: examined by reason, you are found not to exist. For what is does not perish, and what is not is not born. So the duality that belongs to you, mind, is held not to exist.

V 19.9 Seer, seen and seeing—this whole error is imagined by you. Nothing seen is ever perceived apart from seeing. Nor, in the same way, is the dreamer made different by waking.

V 19.10 Imagining too would be without a second in the same way, since it has no connection with anything real, like the circle traced by a whirling firebrand. Since there is no difference of powers, and none from the self, nonduality is established from scripture.[143]

V 19.11 If conscious beings were different from one another, they would surely perish, being limited in extent, as we see with things that differ. And when all were liberated, the world too would come to an end.

V 19.12 Nothing is mine, nor am I anyone's, since I am without a second, and what is imagined does not exist. I am not imagined, since I am established before imagining. Only duality is imagined.

V 19.13 Imagining does not exist in the unborn. It is held to be other than that, yet that is not nonexistence. That from which imagining proceeds is beyond speech, and since it is established before imagining, it is not itself imagined.

V 19.14 For you, duality is unreal: whatever is supposed never actually comes to be seen. Yet it is not mere nonexistence. That from which the imagining of being and non-being proceeds is, like inquiry itself, likewise without a second, and real.

V 19.15 If the being you accept is something you have imagined, then, since inquiry is what reveals it, it does not exist, and when

142 The six waves are hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, old age and death, beyond which the self is said to stand (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.5.1).

143 A burning stick whirled in the dark looks like a ring of fire. It is a stock image for a false appearance.

inquiry is abandoned it remains just as it was. If it were not so, it would not be seen. What is real is held to be real absolutely.

V 19.16 If you say that it is just like the unreal, like a donkey's horn, because it serves no purpose: having no purpose is no ground in the case of the unreal, and so it is none in the reverse case either. It is not otherwise.[144]

V 19.17 And since duality is not established by what gives rise to inquiry, it has spread out from that through illusion. This is established in this way by scripture, by tradition and by reasoning, and it cannot be otherwise.

V 19.18 According to scripture, the nondual differs in nature from imagining, and since it is established before imagining, it is not imagined. Just as what is imagined is denied by "not this, not this," so here too it is denied, to establish what is without distinctions.

V 19.19 In what is thus unimagined, unborn, without a second and imperishable, they imagine being and non-being through births. So they go on and on into becoming, old age and death, which spring from the illusion of their own minds.

V 19.20 If it has neither being nor non-being, it has no state, and no birth from another state; it cannot be otherwise. For the real does not become unreal, nor the unreal real, and there are no action and factors of action. For this reason too it is unborn.

V 19.21 If you hold that its causal factor does nothing, then there is nothing else, for surely there is no factor that does not act. Since being would then not differ from non-being, being could not fall away from itself, just as nothing is decided between the two pans of a balance.

V 19.22 If you do not accept that being and non-being turn into each other, how could there be becoming while being and non-being stay fixed? These two remain apart and fixed. So, mind, there is no birth for anything.

V 19.23 Even granting becoming, since you want it, I tell you: your activity does nothing for me, for I have neither loss nor

144 A donkey's horn is the stock example of something that does not exist at all.

gain. Nor can the nonexistent come to be, whether from itself or from another, even if the two were granted to exist.

V 19.24 Whether permanent or impermanent, things are not joined to one another, and no effect of one upon another is possible among them. So nothing is held to belong to anything, and reality itself lies beyond the reach of words.

V 19.25 Therefore the wise one, having seen through reasoning and from scripture that which is the same, ever shining, free of the duality imagined as being and non-being, attains complete *nirvāṇa*, like a lamp.[145]

V 19.26 The One cannot be made an object by one who knows nothing other than it, yet bad reasoners readily think they know it as something else. One who sees it thus, and does not grasp at qualities, does not fall into delusion about what is without qualities, being free of the fault of grasping.

V 19.27 There is no other way for grasping to end. Grasping alone is the cause of a deluded mind. When grasping itself is left without a cause, one reaches the highest peace, as a fire without fuel goes out.

V 19.28 Homage to the teachers who long ago drew up this nectar of knowledge, churning it from the ocean of the Veda as the great-souled gods drew the nectar from the great ocean, and who saw the highest.[146]

145 *nirvāṇa*: literally "blowing out," as of a lamp; here the complete stilling of the round of rebirth.

146 In the myth, the gods churned the ocean of milk to obtain *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality.